SOUTHEAST ASIA PROGRAM

FALL BULLETIN 2018

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Photo taken by Michael Hoffman in the Citadel (Imperial City) in Hue, Vietnam.

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Letter from the Director

As I put pen to paper (metaphorically speaking), I am looking out over West Hill from the Kahin Center at the lush greenery of summer in full bloom. One of the great privileges for academics is the summer. Those unfamiliar might think this is vacation time, but for most academics this is an intense period of work, with focus on our scholarly research, rather than juggling the four or five or more jobs we do during the academic year (teaching, advising, committee work and other service to the university, administration, service to the field, and research). It is research, the important but seemingly non-urgent task that gets pushed off from one week to the next during the busy school year filled with urgent tasks. For those of us focused on Southeast Asia, the summer provides an opportunity to travel to the region and elsewhere, as well as time to read, think, and write at home, in the Kahin Center, or in the wonderful Echols Collection in Kroch Library. June and July feel like a vast expanse opening up ahead, and then August 1 comes, and reality sets in with the start of the semester.

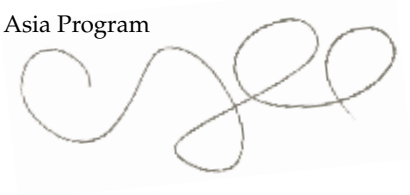
The first part of this summer was taken up preparing the Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center (NRC) and Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship grant proposal. We are delighted that Congress has continued its support of this all-important program and that SEAP is again being recognized with this designation and support for the 2018–22 funding cycle. This provides critical support for language instruction, outreach staff positions and activities, and a number of programmatic initiatives, including further developing in-country study opportunities and strengthening academic partnerships at key institutions in Southeast Asia. SEAP has successfully competed for NRC/Title VI funding since the inception of the program in 1958. Special thanks to our staff for their efforts in making this happen.

We are sorry to bid farewell to Professor Andy Mertha, who has left Cornell to direct the China Program at The Johns Hopkins University SAIS. At the same time, we are excited to welcome two new additions to the SEAP core faculty: Christine Balance, performing and media arts/Asian American studies, focusing on the Philippines and Philippines diaspora; and Shorna Allred, natural resources, working on community engagement in environmental conservation in Malaysia. Both appointments add in exciting ways to our areal and disciplinary breadth. We have also made a commitment to return to an earlier practice in the program of inviting visiting faculty to offer courses in areas not covered by core faculty. This fall we are very pleased to welcome Dr. Ea Darith, deputy director, Angkor International Center for Research and Documentation, Siem Reap, Cambodia, co-teaching Water: Art and Politics in Southeast Asia, with Kaja McGowan; and Gerard (Jerry) Finin, director and senior fellow, Pacific Islands Development Program, East-West Center, University of Hawaii, offering a course on the Philippines.

This spring was a busy and dynamic time for SEAP, including three wonderful conferences in rapid succession: "Possession and Persuasion," the twentieth (!) annual graduate student conference, including Chiara Formichi's keynote address (p. 4); the next in the series of Cornell Modern Indonesia Project's State of the Field conferences, "Sounding Out the State of Indonesian Music," organized by Chris Miller; and the second in the series of cross-Asia program conferences on "Kings and Dictators: The Legacy of Monarchy and the New Authoritarianism in Asia," organized by Magnus Fiskesjö. Thanks are due to Chris and Magnus, as well as to this past year's SEAP graduate committee co-chairs, Juan Fernandez and M. K. Long, not only for organizing a terrific conference, but also for putting together an exciting and intellectually engaging lineup for the spring Gatty Lecture series.

Our incoming student committee co-chairs, Astara Light and Michael Miller, have already put together an exciting line up of Gatty Lectures for the fall, and plans are under way for the third cross-Asia conference on the topic of tea. We are undertaking a history of SEAP projects, integrating a series of interviews with emeritus and former SEAP faculty, along with some written pieces on the history of the program. Stay tuned, as we will be inviting alumni to share memories of their time at SEAP as well.

—Abby Cohn, professor, linguistics, director, Southeast Asia Program



by Chiara Formichi,
associate professor,
Southeast Asian studies

IF YOU... See Something, Say Something

KEYNOTE SPEECH, SEAP GRADUATE CONFERENCE MARCH 2018

At the conference "Possession and Persuasion," Prof. Formichi encouraged students to follow their own intellectual instincts and challenge established paradigms.

I mulled at length over what to make of this opportunity, thinking that maybe I should give you a lecture on my research interests, forcibly framing them within the conference's theme. But I eventually decided against that and decided instead that this was the perfect opportunity to address one concern I've had for many years, first, as I observed my colleagues and friends who were doing their PhD in the U.S., and then interfacing with graduate students here. Hence, the secondary title: "If you see something, say something."

I want to start with an acknowledgement, or maybe an assumption—which I admit might be erroneous, as generalizations tend to be—by recognizing that most of us here in this room have come to the study of Southeast Asia through a personal, intimate connection to the region—a direct link to a place or an individual, a book, a movie or a piece of art; a faraway relative's tale; a neighbor's military experience; or a chance encounter in a hallway.

If you think about it hard enough, you should be able to recall the moment you became "possessed" by Southeast Asia—the day you accepted (or resigned to) the fact that Southeast Asia would define your future and career. If this doesn't apply to you, that's perfectly fine, too. Even if you did not come to the study of Southeast Asia because you were "taken" by its history, landscape, languages, literatures, people, politics, beautiful beaches, or impervious mountains, I bet you can identify a more ephemeral relationship to "Southeast Asia" than, "it was a perfect case study."

I don't want to come across as if I were evoking images of the colonial "gone native," or an orientalist fascination with the exotic other. What I am pointing at here is that early encounters with our own subject matter are often ignited, mediated, and surrounded by emotions and instinctual choices. However, the academic encounter can be dry. It can easily suck the fun and life out of things, dispossessing us of our impressions and instinctual direction, molding us (persuading us) to see things following established paradigms: colonialism, the postcolonial, postmodernism, the subaltern, Marxism, etc. It feels inevitable, doesn't it? And we should agree that direction and guidance are needed to achieve a level of sophistication and analysis that will allow for the advancement of scholarship. Why would universities and grad school exist?

As scholars—and even more so as "scholars in the making"—we feel we must belong to a tradition and claim a genealogy in order to fit in. We feel we must carve a marketable niche for ourselves and be taken as complacent players in the game of disciplinary dictums. But being possessed by the ghosts of this academic field or to pigeonhole your passion for/possession by Southeast Asia to a "case study" will do no

Buddhist monk walking in front of a locked mosque in Meiktila, Myanmar.

good to anyone, neither to the scholar nor the scholarship. The relationship between these two approaches, these two "minds"—one instinctual, the other structured, or even overstructured—ought to reflect a balancing act.

Today I want to take this opportunity to talk about genealogical belonging and its pitfalls, possibly (hopefully) persuading you that you need not sacrifice your own understanding of and connections to the region in exchange for an entry ticket to the arena of academia, that as you take your shot at jumping through the hoops of academia, you can trust your gut feeling and forge your own path ahead. Let's remember that rulers—kings and queens, prime ministers and presidents—have mostly been made through conflicts and breaks. Support for the sociopolitical status quo is rarely praised. Why should it be any different in scholarship? Genealogies appear linear: they forge connections across time and space, granting legitimation. But genealogically imagined communities do not need to converge physically, nor intellectually. And some of the most impressive rulers oftentimes are those who broke with previous lineages.

Continuity and interruptions are nuanced, or relative, phenomena. Many might argue that several of Thailand's coups did not bring much actual change and that Suharto's regime, although structurally different, reproduced many realities of Sukarno's era. Conversely, Malay Rajas followed one another in the fifteenth and sixteenth century in a seemingly smooth fashion, but in fact rather dramatic transformations were taking place as Islam became increasingly influential in reshaping conceptions of political power and authority.

I am not encouraging you to ignore past scholarship or to bash the work of your advisor or that of other "great minds." Reading and engaging with extant work are two cardinal pillars of what we all do when we have the time to do so. Rather, mine is a possibly banal and obvious suggestion to think critically and independently and then build on what is there, go your own way without being afraid of breaking with the scholarly tradition of your field and discipline.

Theories and frames come and go. They are brainchildren of their era. Don't bash right and left, but don't blindly apply jargon-laden frameworks either. Scholarly advancement of the most nuanced kind emerges when we acknowledge the context in which past scholarship was produced and then succeed in first recognizing and deconstructing that, and finally moving forward on our own path, leaving it behind. . . .

As a student in the early 2000s, I landed in Jakarta, convinced that pushes for an Islamic state in late-colonial Indonesia were the result of intellectual influences from the Middle East. It had been beaten into me that any form of Islamic orthodoxy had to be exogenous to Southeast Asia. That's what scholars "in the field" were saying. Fortunately, in the British system PhD candidates are sent on fieldwork very soon, and my soul was saved.

All I needed was to stay away from the Western-defined scholarly field

Street food-seller pushing his cart along one of Meiktila's Muslim neighborhoods.

while immersing myself in the actual field, meaning the archives as much as the cities, campuses, and villages, the people and scholars. The time I spent in Indonesia opened my eyes, ears, and mind. The shift happened without much effort, in fact. I followed the sources—written and oral—and listened to my interlocutors. New ways of looking at the same questions opened up for me.

Ultimately, this is what I believe allowed me to shake off the baggage of past scholarship, which had been by and large produced in Western academia in isolation from its field of action. Islam was indeed everywhere in Indonesia and not as a syncretic, washed down, derivative, and exogenous reality, but as a legitimate, authentic, orthodoxy-concerned, and indigenous one. Although I am not the only scholar today who sees things in this "new" way, some (ahem, rather senior) scholars still raise their eyebrows at this approach and occasionally put their disapproval into print. But let's be honest; this is bound to happen: (a) not everyone will always love what you write, and (b) academic feuds, across or within generations, will exist forever. That's what we do; we argue.[1] . . .

I hope you'll be able to apply the frame of this reflection on the genealogies of the study of Islam in Southeast Asia to your own niche and that the underlying message of this keynote will embolden you to follow your own intellectual and interpretative instincts, giving you solid ground to challenge established paradigms when they do not sound right to you. Paradigms and theories are the product of specific circumstances. Strive to be the masters of your own paradigms. . . .

How do we affirm genealogical belonging while asserting independence of thought? How do we keep true to our intellectual instincts without being perceived as a contrarian and intellectual outcast? As complex as these questions appear to be, in fact there is only one answer to that "how" question: go for it. Follow your intellectual instincts, because it is with them that you'll have to confront yourself for the years to come. Scholarly couching of personal opinions is the mantra, and this means finding a way to frame your argument so that others will listen, not molding your argument to fit an extant frame.

Take your time in the field as an opportunity to go beyond data collection. Get out of your cocoon, let loose, and shake off the constraints of grad school with its coursework and exams. Although it does feel inescapable to place oneself in a genealogical line of thinking and analysis, what is important to remember is that belonging does not preclude one's ability to intellectually break out.

[1] For an in-depth discussion of the relationship between the study of Islam and Southeast Asia, see Chiara Formichi, "Islamic Studies or Asian Studies? Islam in Southeast Asia," *The Muslim World* 106 (2016): 696–718, doi:10.1111/muwo.12166.

Below left: Ton Son Mosque Muslim cemetery, Thon Bhuri, Bangkok. Below right: Kudus Mosque's original red-brick wall and new dome, on the north coast of Central Java.

The Making of an Interdisciplinary Service-Learning Course on CLIMATE CHANGE in Vietnam

Clockwise starting at top left: Cornell students and their local student buddies at the Can Gio Biosphere Reserve. Students learning how to make bánh xèo, a Vietnamese pancake. Thúy presenting her bánh xèo. Students digging a trench in preparation for a biogas installation. Jeff Fralick holding tight to his catch! The group (with local students and farmers) at Vam Xang Orchards. Meal time in Ben Tre, Mekong Delta. Mike Hoffmann enjoying pho to the last drop at Sau Hoai Noodle Factory, Can Tho.

by Thúy Tranviet,
senior lecturer of Vietnamese

In 2016, I created an interdisciplinary course titled Climate Change Awareness and Service Learning in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. It became a yearlong course, covering three terms: seven weeks of instruction at Cornell in fall 2016, followed by a field trip component in Vietnam in winter 2017, and then another seven weeks at Cornell in spring 2017.

The goal was to introduce Cornell undergraduate students to Vietnam and have them experience this Southeast Asian nation through various lenses, the first of which was climate change. In 2016, Vietnam was hit with the worst drought in nearly one hundred years. The Mekong Delta is known as the "rice bowl" of Vietnam due to its vast rice production. The drought led to a serious reduction in rice production and other cash crops, including sugar cane, fruit trees, shrimp and seafood, among other agricultural and aquaculture products.

Every farmer was affected by the drought, and many did not recover from this catastrophe even when our group visited them one year later, during our trip in winter 2017. To people in Vietnam, climate change is a serious threat. Simply put, there are no climate change deniers in Vietnam. As an educator, I felt it was invaluable to give students an opportunity to observe firsthand the dire problems faced by eighteen million people living in the Mekong Delta. My intention was to help students gain a broad understanding of the impacts people in Vietnam face due to climate change.

Second, I wanted this course to be an experiential learning opportunity. While I was aware that a short-term, faculty-led study abroad trip would not be able to properly address the needs of the local communities, especially the sheer enormity of the problem at hand, it would still be an incredible experience if the students were able to engage with local people through meaningful service-learning activities.

Above all, I wanted the students to get to know contemporary, post-war Vietnam. Vietnam today is a vibrant amalgamation of the old and the new. With recent rapid economic growth and development, the country is undergoing major political and social transformation, where traditions and reforms are constantly evolving and negotiating, shaping and reshaping everyday existence. It is a land with extraordinary landscapes and fascinating street life—and street food—a complex ancient and modern country to study and explore.

With these intentions in mind, I approached Professor Michael (Mike) Hoffmann, executive director of the Cornell Institute for Climate Smart Solutions, and asked him to come aboard. With Mike's knowledge and passion in climate change education and my intimate familiarity of Vietnam and background training in service-learning, we set out to design an

interdisciplinary course to give our students a unique experience, in the hopes that it would be among the most salient learning moments of their Cornell education.

The creation of the course actually began several years earlier. I had made a couple of exploratory trips to Vietnam to identify local partners and scout sites for the service-learning activities. Although we were in Vietnam for only two weeks during this course, many people were involved to make this component happen. Among the local partners were two universities, Ton Duc Thang University (TDTU) in Ho Chi Minh City, which provided logistical support, and Can Tho University (CTU), along with scientists from the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Delta Research and Global Observation Network, (DRAGON). DRAGON is a research institute on climate change, and it offered our students lectures on all kinds of issues related to climate change, from biodiversity to aquaculture and rice farming, to economics and local music of the area. One CTU professor who specializes in biogas (gaseous fuel, especially methane, produced by the fermentation of organic matter) led the service-learning component, helping the group build a biogas digester at a local farmer's house.

Other service-learning components included planting trees at a biosphere reserve; making *bánh tét*, the Lunar New Year rice cakes; and distributing the rice cakes to the local people in the village. The students also harvested seasonal vegetables, learned about tropical fruits (and ate them), tried their hands at (slippery) hand-fishing in muddy creeks, and made their own Vietnamese pancakes. We traveled in all types of vehicles: buses, boats, ferries, and bikes (but no motorbikes), navigating the country roads, the floating markets, and the deep waterways of the delta.

In Ho Chi Minh City, our excursions included a visit to Independence Palace, an evening show at a water puppet theater, and a view from Bitexco Skydeck, the city's tallest building. The most poignant and somber stop was the War Remnants Museum. Some students expressed in their journals that the exhibits were eye-opening, a history lesson that they did not have in high school in America. As they internalized the destruction of war and the sorrow of loss, they gained a personalized understanding of the importance of peace. We also took a day trip near the city to visit the memorable Cu Chi tunnels and the great Cao Dai Temple in Tây Ninh. The students most enjoyed the "buddy" program, where they were paired with local Vietnamese students at various service-learning sites and field excursions. Needless to say, multiple friendships were formed, with multiple "likes" on Facebook soon to follow.

The two weeks in Vietnam were flanked by two seven-week seminars at Cornell in the previous fall and the following spring semesters. We wanted to dedicate time in the fall to prepare the students for the winter trip. Besides the overview lectures on climate change, we organized guest lecturers from Cornell University as well as climate change experts from other universities in order to offer a more in-depth focus on the specific challenges facing the Mekong Delta. We had many orientation meetings where we discussed the trip preparations and service-learning activities with guests from the Cornell Office of Global Learning (formerly known as Cornell Abroad) and Dr. Richard Kiely from Engaged Cornell. In addition to the preparatory seven-week seminar, students were required to take VIET 1100, Elements of Vietnamese Language and Culture, to learn basic language skills, phrases, and conversational pieces, along with topics of Vietnamese culture, to acquaint them with the country, the language, and daily life in the Mekong Delta.

Returning from Vietnam, the group reconvened for the third part of the course. In the seven-week spring seminar, we discussed and reflected on the overall experience and worked on final projects. All ten students presented papers on various topics that were thoughtful and reflective of their learning journey. For example, topics explored by the students included the environmental costs of war, the costs of climate change, the environmental policy and agricultural productivity in the Mekong Delta in the face of climate change, and the changing agricultural landscape of the Mekong Delta. Last but not least were the merits of service-learning in the Mekong Delta.

The primary goal of this course was for students to become more conscious of human impacts on the environment. We also hoped that the service-learning components would heighten their sense of civic engagement and social responsibility. In reflecting on the course, I feel that the overall experience helped the students not only expand their knowledge on climate change, but also deepen their worldview and empathy. Through close interactions with the local people in the communities, the students learned about the Vietnamese people and their challenges in the face of climate change as a lived experience. They also learned about the anguish of war, the value of perseverance, and the meaning of forgiveness and international friendship. I think the memories from this course will stay with them for a long time.

POSTSCRIPT: Two students from the course, Marc Alessi and Jeffrey Fralick, graduated in May 2018. This fall, both will attend graduate schools: Marc in atmospheric science at Cornell and Jeff in sustainability science at Columbia University. Posting on Facebook, Jeff wrote, "My personal statement involved my trip to Vietnam—thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to travel to your beautiful country! Cám ơn, cô Thúy!"

Thúy Tranviet received her PhD in education from Cornell University with a specialization in international service-learning and community engagement. In addition to the local partners, friends, and colleagues in Vietnam, she would like to thank the Cornell Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies for support from an Internationalizing the Cornell Curriculum grant as well as SEAP and The Office of Global Learning for other administrative support.

VIETNAM

Microcosm of a Globally Changing Climate

Fishing boats on a beach in Quang Tri Province.

by Michael Hoffmann, professor of entomology and executive director, Cornell Institute for Climate Smart Solutions

As I mucked my way at sunrise to the mess hall, I saw the horizon rise up miles away—the result of tons of bombs dropping from B-52s. At the time, I was a young Marine witnessing the formidable firepower of the US military in action during the war in Vietnam, a tiny country about the size of New Mexico. In total, the United States dropped more than seven million tons of bombs on Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, along with defoliants sprayed on millions of acres of forests and agricultural land during the duration of the war.

During a visit last year, I stood on what was left of the An Hoa US Marine base airstrip, near where I trudged to breakfast forty-seven years ago. I had returned to Vietnam for two reasons; one was personal, just to see what it looked like today. The second was professional: as the executive director of the Cornell University Institute for Climate Smart Solutions, I wanted to see firsthand how climate change was affecting Vietnam. This is an important mission, because our combined carbon footprints not only impact our home nations, but all nations, including Vietnam. Looking at this issue from another perspective, while bombs are no longer dropping from B-52s in Vietnam, the United States has contributed more than a quarter of the accumulated carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.[1] Even though the war ended decades ago, we are still altering the landscape of Vietnam and affecting its people—seas are rising and it is getting hotter.

With two thousand miles of coastline, Vietnam faces extraordinary challenges due to our warming climate, and it could serve as a bellwether of future climate-change impacts on agriculture and infrastructure everywhere. Continuing on our current path of worldwide greenhouse-gas emissions will take us into dangerous territory. We are looking at a future world of more violent storms, mass displacement of people, and increasing social and economic turmoil: record-breaking heat, forests devastated from fires and insects, and ominous changes to our oceans and glaciers—all very obvious to those who are willing to see.[2] Vietnam has a new battle to fight, but it is part of a battle we all must fight if we are to protect the environment that sustains us.

In Vietnam, the impacts of climate change are particularly intense for the Mekong River Delta, a region about six feet above sea level, where Vietnam grows fifty percent of its rice. It is home to more than seventeen million people. Salt water intrusion caused in part by sea-level rise, along with higher temperatures, is making the region less suitable for the production of rice and other crops. Even the farming of shrimp, a

Thousands of tilapia being raised on a floating fish farm in the Mekong.

MY FIRST VISIT IN MARCH 2016...

...led to a subsequent two-week visit in January 2017 with ten Cornell students. This visit was part of a course, Climate Change Awareness and Service Learning in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam, co-taught by Dr. Thúy Tranviet, Department of Asian Studies, and me. The course was created to help the students become better-informed global citizens through witnessing firsthand the impacts of climate change while gaining meaningful international engagements with the people in the Mekong Delta. The visit also included time at the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City, where we all were reminded of the trauma of the Vietnam War, or the "American War," as it is called in Vietnam.[6] This was a particularly intense experience for me.

The visit also included lectures by Vietnamese university experts and meetings with representatives from local government agencies and farmers to assess beliefs and perceptions of climate change and what the Vietnamese are doing to address the new challenges posed by climate change. Students also engaged in service-learning activities in several communities in the Mekong Delta.

Early on, the students learned that in Vietnam, climate change is an accepted fact, is discussed freely, and theVietnamese don't blame us for what is happening to them. Marc Alessi '18 stated it very well: "I felt so embarrassed that I had contributed to the climate change that was destroying their livelihoods. How did they repay me? By inviting me into their homes for tea. They did not hate us; in fact, they were extremely welcoming, hopeful, and forward looking."

Overall, the time in Vietnam was a life-changing event for many of the students experiencing the incredibly rich culture and history of Vietnam, the food, the peace and quiet of the countryside as well as the clamor and vibrancy of the city—and, most important, the resiliency of the Vietnamese people who face a daunting future.

The visit to Vietnam was made possible in part by an Internationalizing the Cornell Curriculum grant through Global Cornell. A subsequent opportunity for students to share their climate change stories with Congressional offices in Washington, DC, was funded by Engaged Cornell, Office of Engagement Initiatives.[7]

A lot of transport occurs on the water highways in the Mekong.

Entrance to a labyrinth of tunnels under the demilitarized zone (DMZ), used during the war by hundreds of people.

salt-tolerant creature, can be challenged by excessively salty conditions.

Vietnam grows much of its own food but is also an important agricultural exporter. It is the second largest producer of coffee, one of the top exporters of rice in the world, and a major exporter of fish and shrimp valued at more than $6 billion per year. Vietnam is also one of the fastest growing markets for importing US food and agricultural products such as cotton, soybeans, nuts, and dairy, and it is an important link in our interconnected and interdependent global food system.[3]

The Vietnamese are a resilient people, having survived centuries of war and conflict. But what about climate change, with its wide-ranging impacts? How do you keep back the seas? How do you cool down the atmosphere? Where will all the people move to as the seas begin to swamp the vast Mekong Delta, the coastal cities, and other low-lying areas? Take this a step further and think about how Manhattan would react to rising sea waters lapping at its streets. The Mekong Delta, just six feet above sea level, seems a world away, but much of New York City is less than sixteen feet above sea level, and parts of lower Manhattan are just five feet above sea level. To make things worse, some climatologists predict that seas around New York would rise twice as much as the rest of the US coast. New Orleans, Miami, Philadelphia, Sacramento, Boston, Honolulu, and hundreds more US cities are at risk as the seas rise.[4]

Some of the challenges facing agriculture in the Mekong are being addressed by the development of more salt- and heat-tolerant rice varieties and by using a three-pond shrimp and fish-farming strategy, in which one pond holds fresh water that is used to dilute water in the other two ponds when they become too salty. A number of Vietnamese and global organizations are supporting these measures and others intended to help sustain food production in the Mekong. The efforts are showing positive results, but unless the world comes to grip with the production of CO_2 and methane that drive climate change, the plight of agriculture will worsen, whether it is in Vietnam, Kansas, or the Ukraine. Neighborhoods around the world, from Saigon to SoHo, ultimately could face encroaching sea levels.

We have much to learn from Vietnam. For other veterans of the war, I encourage you to return this country. It is moving on and is so different today.[5] For all others, visit. Enjoy the amazing food and the rich culture, and take in the remnants of the war—but also see and learn from this new environmental battle that ultimately will affect us all, no matter where we live on this planet: a rapidly warming climate that is approaching a "point of no return."

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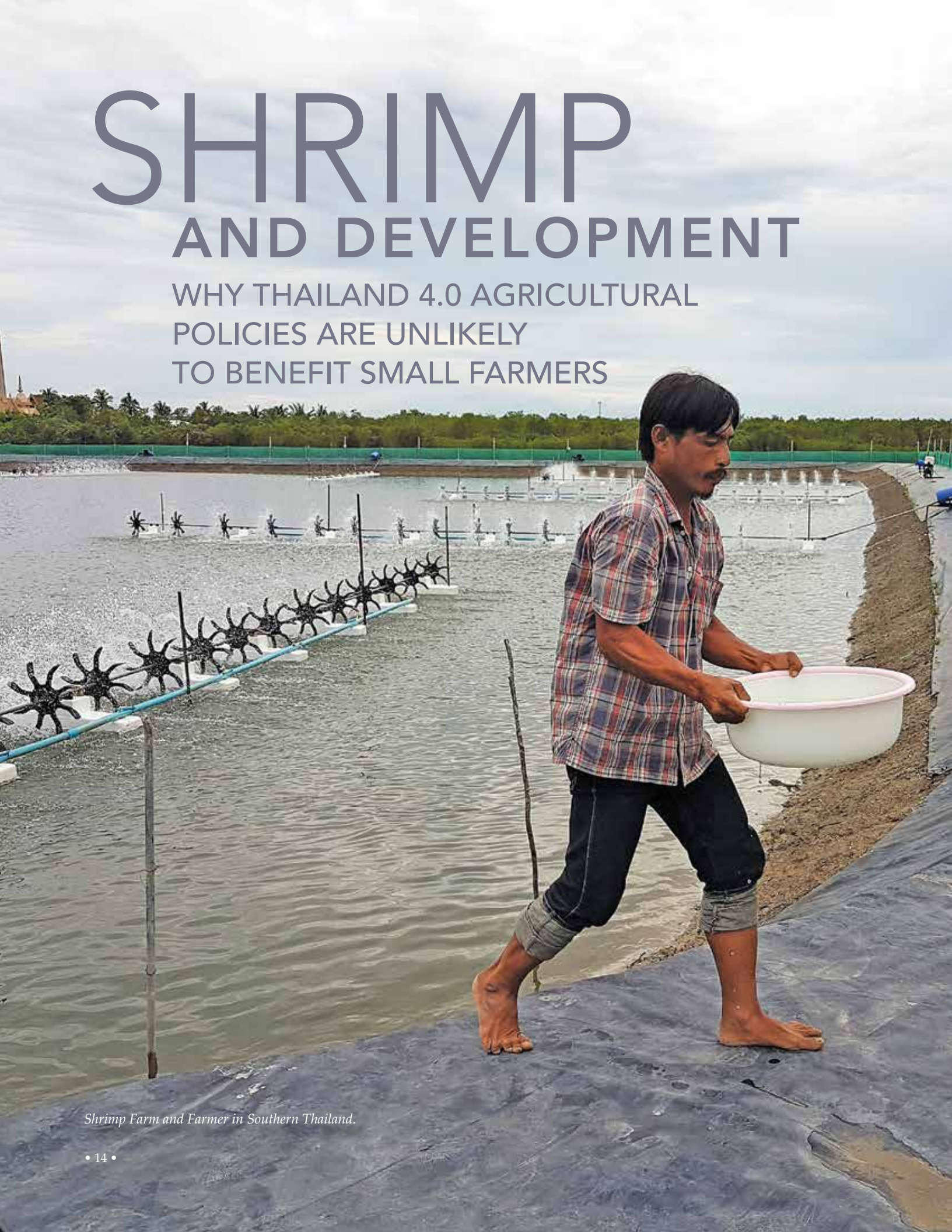
SHRIMP AND DEVELOPMENT

WHY THAILAND 4.0 AGRICULTURAL POLICIES ARE UNLIKELY TO BENEFIT SMALL FARMERS



Shrimp Farm and Farmer in Southern Thailand.

by Katie Rainwater,
PhD candidate, development sociology

Katie's dissertation research, funded in part by the Fulbright-Hays, looks comparatively at labor relations in Thailand and Bangladesh's export-driven shrimp industries. Katie conducted dissertation research in Thailand from June 2017 to March 2018.

It was a good thing I arrived at Pairua's home when I did. Had I come any later, he would have been absorbed in the card game that occupied his afternoons and evenings on days when he was not hired as a laborer to harvest shrimp or work construction. He would have likely been loath to leave the game—on which money was always wagered—to participate in my research evaluating the efficacy of shrimp aquaculture as a development strategy.

Pairua had once been a shrimp farmer. In approximately 1989, he sold the twelve *rai* of land he had inherited from his parents, subsistence rice farmers, to Charoen Pokphand Group. Also known as CP Group, Thailand's largest agribusiness experienced explosive growth in the 1960s when it opened chicken farms and, more important, began selling genetically improved chicks and specially formulated feed to Thai farmers, a method that it would apply to shrimp production from 1986 onward.[1]

With the proceeds from the sale to CP, Pairua purchased a three-*rai* plot of land. Although he had lost acreage in the deal, he felt that he had come out ahead because his new plot of land bordered a road, making it logistically possible for him to farm shrimp. As Pairua's neighbor chimed in to explain, "Back then, everyone in the village wanted to farm shrimp. Shrimp fields (*na gung*) were booming. Those that made them got a good profit. Villagers also wanted a profit. They wanted money. They wanted gold. They wanted to have lots and lots of money."

In his second harvest, Pairua was able to earn back his investment for the land excavation required to create a shrimp pond. Before long, he rented another plot of land and hired a relative to watch over this second pond. Initially, profits flowed in. An anthropologist conducting research at the beginning of the shrimp boom reported that villagers would say, "Raising shrimp is the least risky of activities," and: "There is no business comparable to shrimp where you invest so little to realize such large returns—except for selling heroin."[2]

Even from the beginning, disease would overcome the shrimp pond in about one of every three cycles. Yet at first, Pairua earned more than enough in other cycles to compensate for these losses. Over time, however, the declining quality of shrimp seed, the rising cost of feed, the increasing severity of disease, and the mercurial nature of prices ate into his profits. Seeding a pond began to feel more like a gamble than a sound investment. By the time he quit in 2003, Pairua


Left: Shrimp farmers discuss ways to reduce the cost of production and increase profits with officials from the Ministry of Agriculture at a Praeng Yaay meeting. Right: Shrimp is sorted and sized on a highway beside the shrimp farm.

a total of 800,000 baht ($18,605) to the feed store, the agricultural bank, and friends and relatives. Fifteen years later, he still owes 400,000 baht ($13,333) to the bank. His work as a day laborer does not allow him to chip away very much on the principal. Nonetheless, he makes sure to pay the interest each month so as not to lose his collateral—the land under his house, his last holding after he sold his shrimp pond to pay his debt to the feed store.

Pairua's experience would seem to offer support to detractors of shrimp aquaculture who describe it as a form of accumulation by dispossession, realizing fast profit for wealthy individuals at the expense of a peasantry dispossessed from their traditional livelihood. Yet, reflecting on his experience, Pairua remarks, "It does not matter that I was not successful. Others, lots of others, were successful. With rice, sometimes there was enough to eat and sometimes there was not...In the past, when we farmed rice, the villagers did not have work... But with shrimp farming there is waged work."

Pairua's avowed preference to live as a day laborer instead of a subsistence rice farmer, as well as his description of other villagers' success, should give pause to those who dismiss aquaculture on grounds that it destroys traditional livelihoods or benefits only the wealthy. At the same time, Pairua's position—indebted and dependent for his sustenance on sporadically available day laborer—is hardly enviable. He wants to get back into farming shrimp for himself but now lacks both land and capital.

Thailand is often cited as an example of a country suffering from its ensnarement in the "middle-income trap," a term that describes a failure to upgrade to higher-value forms of manufacturing, which results in a large proportion of the workforce (42% in 2013) remaining in a low-productivity agriculture sector (that produced 11% of value in 2013).[3] The tension created by uneven economic development has been eased somewhat by the government's policy of offering price supports for agricultural commodities (including shrimp), a practice that former democratically elected Prime Minister Thaksin (2001–6) expanded and that has been subsequently continued by the currently ruling military junta (from 2014).[4] However, alleging that previous governments have only issued surface-level solutions to the problem of low-agricultural productivity, the junta has made reform of the agriculture sector a pillar of its policy to upgrade Thailand's economy, from dependence on heavy industry and export (dubbed "Thailand 3.0") to one based on high value and innovation ("Thailand 4.0").[5]

A video created by the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives to introduce the reforms begins by proposing: "What is the problem of Thai farmers? The problem of Thai farmers is that they are farming in an old way (*baep derm*). They are never willing to change to pursue modern agriculture, and there is a lack of planning for the production of agricultural commodities on the level of the household and the level of the country. All this has caused farmers to live in a state of hardship for a very long time."[6] Through better planning and the application of new technologies such as precision farming, agricultural robotics, and biotechnology the government has vowed to increase the average annual income of farmers from 56,540 baht ($1,706) to 390,000 baht ($11,768) within twenty years.[7]

Shrimp aquaculture represents something of a vanguard of the agriculture sector that the government is trying to create. Not only was Thailand the number one shrimp exporter in the world from the advent of shrimp aquaculture in Asia in the 1980s through 2013, but despite a fall in production following disease outbreak, it continues to rely on more technically dynamic and intensive farming techniques than its competitor shrimp-exporting states such as India, Indonesia, and Vietnam. It is no surprise that shrimp farmers have featured widely in the government's public relation campaign around its flagship *Praeng Yaay* (Large Plot) program, in which agricultural cooperatives work with extension officers and the private sector to lower the cost of inputs and increase outputs through planning, the application of technology, and improved farm management.

Privately, fisheries bureaucrats expressed their lack of confidence in the program. One explained that it is better suited to other types of agriculture such as rice farming, where equipment could be shared to maximize economy of scale. Another derided the effort as all smoke and mirrors. We spent the better part of a morning chatting in his unairconditioned office. The fan cutting through the stuffy air had been donated, like all the office furniture, by grateful—or favor seeking—fishery cooperative or village heads. "Thailand 4.0," he sighed. "Did you see the Auntie that came in before?" He referenced an elderly woman who was filing for government support after her tilapia farm had been flooded. "She's Thailand 1.0. No education, no knowledge. And yet we are supposed to develop her into Thailand 4.0. And I'm the only fishery officer here, responsible for two districts. These are the resources the government devotes to agriculture in this country of farmers and fishers."

"I was in debt many hundreds of thousand baht," a Praeng Yaay participant explained when interviewed by a broadcaster from NBT, a government public relations channel, on the occasion of the prime minister's visit to his farm. "But now, I recover my investment and then obtain a profit."[8] The representative from CP Group, the private sector partner in the project, explained that the farmer's success was a consequence of using technology, specifically CP's "Three Cleans method"—or the use of a clean pond, clean seed (immature shrimp fry), and clean water.[9] The latter two "technologies," I learned from farmers, were difficult for small farmers to implement.

CP has a policy requiring farmers to purchase CP-brand shrimp feed in order to obtain the privilege of purchasing CP's fast-growing "clean" shrimp seed. Unlike other producers of shrimp feed, CP does not extend credit to farmers through the end of the production cycle, which would allow them to pay for inputs through the proceeds from the harvest. This policy puts the purchase of CP feed, and hence CP seed, out of reach of many small farmers who do not have several hundred thousand baht on hand. Furthermore, clean water, in the sense meant by the CP representative, entails reserving approximately seventy percent of pond area to water filtration, leaving only about thirty percent of pond area for grow-out operations. This was impossible for all the farmers in my field site in Southern Thailand, most of whom only had one or two small ponds, their reduced landholdings partially a consequence of CP's purchase of a couple thousand *rai* of farmland in the village in the 1980s.

The Praeng Yaay program from my field site was never featured on TV. In meetings between the agricultural extension officer and groups of farmers that I observed, the farmers scoffed when asked to come up with ways to reduce the costs of inputs and increase outputs through planning and technology, stating that this could not be achieved without the cooperation of the private sector. Eventually, a couple methods were half-heartedly ventured: have CP cancel their policy linking the sale of seed to feed, and have CP implement a policy to issue partial refunds if the shrimp dies within a few days of seeding.

Unlike the premise of the Praeng Yaay program, in which private-sector representatives are to act in an advisory capacity, farmers indicated that a redistribution of risks and benefits between farmers and agribusiness was required. In an interview after the conclusion of this Praeng Yaay meeting a couple of farmers expressed little faith that their proposed policies would be implemented. "CP is above the state; the public sector can't stand up to them," one of them explained. In the end, they opted not to participate in the Praeng Yaay program.

Shrimp farmers in Thailand cannot be said to have eschewed the ways of modern farming. Many, like Pairua, eagerly transformed their inheritance into a pond for producing agro-commodities. But, just as upgrading to higher-value forms of manufacturing is difficult, it is also difficult to raise productivity levels in the shrimp sector, as this requires finding methods to intensively farm monocultures after disease has become endemic and soil and water resources have become degraded.[10]

CP has responded to this challenging environment with a breeding program—its seeds yield fast-growing shrimp, thus limiting exposure to disease and weather conditions in grow-out ponds. But by owning the technology, CP can stipulate the conditions under which it is distributed, which includes withholding credit on feed sales, privileging large farmers' access to seed, and a no-refund policy. The Praeng Yaay program in Chanthaburi, implemented in 2016, had only twenty-four participants as of mid-2017.[11] Given that capital and land constraints will prevent most small-scale farmers from adopting the "Three Cleans" method pioneered by CP, it is clear that this program is not living up to its promise to dramatically raise farmers' income through technology and planning.

Although the junta government has identified technology as necessary to the growth of the agricultural sector, it is not investing sufficient state resources into the development of farming inputs (such as shrimp seeds) or the development of grow-out methods that could be used by small farmers with capital constraints. It is unlikely that this will be addressed in the foreseeable future. Shrimp farmers are politically active in Thailand, yet their activity typically limited to asking for price supports in times when the global price for shrimp drops. To the extent that Thailand 4.0 succeeds, it will likely be at the behest of private-sector actors such as CP, without regard for the likes of Pairua.

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Searching
for the Anthropocene in the Footsteps of Claire Holt

Thousands of dead fish floated to the surface of Lake Toba, North Sumatra, while I was conducting fieldwork in May 2016. News reports later estimated, and were at a loss to explain why, about 1500 tons of fish died in the lake that month. Some reports suggested that volcanic activity had cut off the oxygen supply for these fish, but pollution seemed the more likely cause of the deaths. The pollution stemmed from two main economic activities: tourism and aquaculture.

by Faizah Zakaria,
SEAP visiting fellow

Tourists staying at the many hotels dotting the lake's edge left waste that depleted the oxygen supply in the lake, while aquaculture encouraged the infusion of phosphorus effluents into the water through food in fish farms. Of the two activities, tourism is gaining dominance.

In casual conversation with a fisherman by the lake regarding these deaths, he mentioned that smallholder fish farms in the area would soon be shut down in order to make way for greater state-led developments of tourism in Toba and Samosir. The dead fish seemed to presage further endings—of smallholder fish farms, their fish, and their aspirations. Since a catastrophic volcanic eruption ten thousand years ago gave birth to it, Lake Toba has been slowly drawing human activity into its orbit. That activity is accelerating in this human-dominant geological epoch known as the Anthropocene.

Much of that activity, such as the transitions from small-scale fishing to fish farms to large-scale tourism, have led to concerns about the sustainability of the ecosystem in the area. At the time I conducted my fieldwork in Indonesia, I was searching for a way to understand why

religion, as a system of ethics, generally fails to play a decisive role in movements for a sustainable environment. This was not always the case. While we can be skeptical of the idea of a more ecologically responsible past, there does seem to be a sharp break between the period when animistic religions enchanted one's perceptions of the landscape and the unbridled exploitation that occurred when it was disenchanted. The chiefs of the Batak, the dominant ethnic group in North Sumatra, for example, once limited the number of trees that could be felled for timber under the belief that wanton cutting would disturb the spirits. It seems, then, that part of the explanation for the current environmental disregard could lie in the transition from animism to monotheism.

Returning to the image of water, archaeologist Willem Stutterheim once wrote of animism:

> Daily life is directed by the souls of the departed ancestors who were supposed to be dwelling in the mountains. It was they who lived on at the hidden sources of the rivers, without whose waters no rice would grow. They were the founders of the village communities; they had established its customs and cared for its growth. These ancestors also disposed of the sources of magic life-power, the power which caused not only the life of man, but also that of animals and plants, even of the community of men—the mysterious *fluidum* without which no welfare was possible . . . it was perceived that through many causes the balance, the right amount of life-power of the community, could be disturbed.[1]

Drawing from this concept, mass fish deaths in the water can be perceived not only as a result of chemicals in the water, but also as a disequilibrium of the spiritual life power, an invisible estrangement that had once invited community response but no longer does. Where shamans as community leaders once led the way in disciplining human conduct in the forests and waterways, environmental protest is now largely spearheaded by nongovernmental organizations, while local and religious response to such issues is divided.

For example, during my fieldwork, the struggle of the Pandumaan-Sipatihuta *adat* community to protect their traditional benzoin forests against clear-cutting by pulp and the paper mill company PT Toba Pulp Lestari drew opposition rather than support from some leaders within the community who felt development, not tradition, would lead to progress. Although a few Batak church leaders joined in demonstrations against the company, religious leaders generally remained at the sidelines, participants instead of leaders.

It would be simplistic and inaccurate to claim that monotheistic religion is inherently more pernicious to the environment than animism. Rather, my research focuses on the historical conjunctures in the moment of conversion to Islam and Christianity that enabled these religions to be interpreted in ways that reinforce rather than resist the logic of capitalist environmental extraction. This interpretation brings religion into the story of the Anthropocene, an epoch of unprecedented human dominance. Focusing on the material changes to the landscape that ensued from the transition to a capitalistic economy, an embrace of new religions, and the concurrent diminishing of animistic ritual, it reads like a narrative of rupture.

Observing a Batak dance on Samosir back in 2016, I was struck by how emblematic it was of two ways in which conversion from animism to monotheism changed the way people relate to nature. First, having a buffalo tied to a post at the center of the performance space stems from the old practice of animal sacrifice in the dance, which is a remnant of the animist conception of the human and animal as interchangeable beings. That act of bloody sacrifice has now been eliminated, and in contemporary dances the animal is a passive observer. The apex of the dance today is instead a chorus of "Horas," a Batak greeting to celebrate human kinship.

This change is indicative of a shift toward anthropocentrism, reflecting monotheistic faiths in which the human occupies a special position by virtue of his or her exceptional qualities in being closer to the image of God. Second, in the dance today, there is a marked absence of rituals to propitiate the spirits of one's ancestors that appear in archival descriptions. Animism posits that the spirits of the departed live among us on earth and should be venerated. Respect for nature derived partly from respect for the power of such spirits, which are invisible but still intimately linked to the natural world.

This belief contrasts with those of monotheistic religions that generally believe in a post-Earth life located as a separate realm from this world. Because Earth's ending is assured for adherents of the monotheistic faiths, their guardianship of the world, including preservation of the earthly realm, is perceived as futile. For salvation religions that believe in an

Far left: Batak datu *drawing magic signs, Samosir, North Sumatra. Left: Batak dance, as performed for tourists on Samosir Island.*

afterlife, a believer's compulsion to live ethically in a manner that benefits all beings on Earth does not come from a desire for sustainability of this world. Instead, it stems from a moral notion that a believer seeks to do right. These two shifts are key ways in which conversion from animism to monotheism changes the way societies relate to nature.

Since coming to Cornell in January 2018 and utilizing the library resources here, I found written and pictorial trails of Cornellian scholars who had also visited North Sumatra and observed similar phenomena but came to different conclusions. The work of Claire Holt, in particular, makes me question the linearity of time in which I have based my thinking on the ruptures that conversions of faiths created in our relationships with the natural world. Of the dance, Holt writes:

> One of the great fascinations of the Indonesian dance world lies in the simultaneous existence of dances which in other places might be stages in a long historical evolution. . . . In Indonesia, one cannot trace a general evolutionary line. All stages are present. Yet it is possible to recognize in some dances the transformations they have undergone, to discover that the content and function of certain dances are reinterpretations of older conceptions, to follow the secularization of ritual.[2]

Holt recognizes change, but not in a linear fashion. According to her interpretations, older conceptions are not left behind in the wake of change. They are submerged and reformulated, but they stay present. In the secularization of ritual, what was once sacred may become banal, and what was once banal may become sacred. In the absence of a general evolutionary line, such changes are cyclical rather than linear. Secularization of ritual continues, but then, so does the ritualization of the secular.

Another example of the cycle of beliefs can be seen in observations about lizards in Indonesia. The lizard, Holt claimed when she wrote her 1967 book, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change*, retains its significance as a symbol of fertility from prehistoric times to the present. Termed as *boraspati*, meaning "earth spirit," the lizard often appears on beautifully decorated contemporary rice granaries of the Toba Batak. The lizard is also carved at the entrance of many Batak dwellings.

Joining in a guided tour in Samosir one day, I asked my tour guide about the prominence of lizards decorating Batak dwellings. There is a belief, he said, that the Batak should take the lizard's behavior as a model. If you can stick to the wall like a lizard (*menempel seperti cicak*), you can survive anywhere. I don't know if this was a personal view or a representative one, but there seems to be a shift from the ritual carving of lizards symbolizing a sacralization of fertility to symbolizing survival through adaptability. This example illuminates shifts in perception and meaning over time: what was once revered is now banal (the ability to reproduce), and what was once banal is now revered (the ability to live).

In essence, this short walk along the trail left by Holt leads me to question my initial theories about ruptured belief systems due to major transitions in a society's religion. I had thought to bring religion into the Anthropocene through an inquiry into how it took a back seat in promoting environmental health and sustainability. This narrative, however, should not be about a break between a more ecologically wise past and an environmentally exploitative present. Perhaps it should be more about asking how and why the sacred in nature emerges and ebbs. Bringing religion into the Anthropocene is to consider it as past, present, and future, as a cycle of simultaneous sacralization and desacralization. This is important because, after all, what we hold to be sacred and what we see as banal may help determine what eventually survives.

WITH MANY THANKS TO Kaja McGowan, associate professor of art history and archaeology at Cornell, for sparking my interest in Holt's journey.

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1 Willem F. Stutterheim, *Indian Influences in Old-Balinese Art* (London: The India Society, 1935), 2–3.

2 Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Universty Press, 1967), 101.

A church amidst the rice fields in Balige, Lake Toba.

A Lao-American teenager on the way to pay respect to his father's relics via the Mekong River. Screenshot from Xaisongkham's Kab Ban (A Long Way Home)*, 2018.*

The Undulating Landscape of Lao Cinema

"We just decided to call ourselves the Lao New Wave. Need not anybody to call us so!"...

...remarked Lao filmmaker Xaisongkham Induangchanthy with laughter at the film screening event "Mekong Rerouting: Contemporary Lao Cinema and Remnants of War," held at Cornell on April 22, 2018. Xaisongkham was referring to the film collective, Lao New Wave Cinema Productions, which he cofounded in 2012 with other young filmmakers, sound professionals, and graphic designers residing in Laos. Unlike the French Nouvelle Vague or the British New Wave, whose "newness" is defined by a radical break from preexisting modes of filmmaking, this self-designated Lao New Wave presents a distinct set of aesthetic and historical aspirations. Their goal is at once humble and ambitious—to rebuild Lao cinema from its near nonexistence.[1] Xaisongkham's self-mocking remark conveys an awareness of this uneven trajectory of Lao cinematic history, a history that is inextricably linked to the country's long and bumpy path to independence.

When I invited Xaisongkham to Cornell in April for a post-screening conversation, it was already our fourth rendezvous. Ithaca's early spring chill, however, contrasted with the summer heat (and sometimes rain) in Bangkok, Luang Prabang, and Vientiane, where our previous meetings took place. I first met Xaisongkham at the Fifth International Con

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Luck (Khamly Philavong), a female protagonist in Xaisongkham Induangchanthy's narrative short, is a volunteer in a UXO-mining team. Screenshot from Xaisongkham's Tok Khang (Those Below)*, 2016.*

ference on Lao Studies, organized by Thammasat University in Bangkok in July 2016. In a conference room overlooking the Chao Phraya River, Xaisongkham cochaired a panel discussion titled "Surviving Filmmaking in Laos" with two other rising stars of today's Lao film industry: Anysay Keola and Mattie Do. Outlining survival tactics under the country's political and economic constraints, each filmmaker related their experiences collaborating with transnational organizations to secure funding, improvise their scripts to dodge state censorship, and balance filmmaking and other (often more stable and life-sustaining) jobs.

Collectively, their discussions offered a hopeful note on the future of Lao cinema as each of them pushed the geopolitical and cultural limits in post-socialist Laos, especially with regard to state restrictions on media discussions of issues that are considered "negative" depictions of Lao society such as corruption, violence, and sexuality. Through their negotiation with the Lao Department of Cinema under the Ministry of Information and Culture, these filmmakers have opened up new possibilities for serious analyses of social issues such as same-sex relationships, ethnic minoritization, and economic inequality.

Anysay's feature film *Noy (Above It All)*, 2016, showcased at the conference's film screening section, is regarded as the "first Lao gay-themed film," depicting the tragic relationship of two closeted gay men. Having learned from the banning of his film script that addresses LGBT issues, Anysay worked closely with the authorities from start to finish to ensure state approval.[2] Besides LGBT issues, *Noy* also features an interethnic romance between the Lao and the Hmong, a minoritized group whose military alliance with the United States during the Cold War and ethnic stigmas can lead to controversies when depicting them on screen.[3] Anysay told his audiences in the conference room with the river view that he still had a clear memory of making a phone call to state officers right in the middle of the film shoot to make sure the dialogue was "appropriate." Playing with the word "Noy" (minor), the name of one of the gay lovers and the Hmong character, Anysay's film tackles issues of sexual and ethnic minorities, which continue to receive a red flag from some Lao authorities and audiences.

Mattie Do, a Lao-American director, whose directorial debut *Chanthaly*, 2012, was hailed as the "first Lao horror movie," spoke of her coproduced film *Bangkok Nites* (dir. Katsuya Tomita, 2016) and her second film project *Nong Hak* (Dearest Sister), 2016, another horror film that has been screened in several film festivals worldwide. I had a chance to see *Nong Hak* at our very own Cinemapolis as part of the Ithaca Fantastik film festival in November 2016. Based on a common practice in Laos and elsewhere in Southeast Asia in which lottery tickets are on high demand once or twice (or four times in Laos!) a month, and supernatural powers are the only recourse, *Nong Hak* unfolds as a suspenseful ghost story with an uncompromising view on the issues of economic disparities and gender roles in contemporary Lao society.

The film revolves around a troubling relationship between two women: a middle-class woman named Ana (played by Vilouna Phetmany), who becomes wealthy after her marriage to a European businessman, and her cousin Nok (played by Amphaiphun Phimmapunya), who comes from the countryside to care for Ana as she starts losing her sight and seeing ghosts. Whenever Ana's vision is haunted, she becomes half-conscious and mumbles lucky numbers, a circumstance that allows Nok to conveniently take advantage of her. This troubling dynamic between the two "sisters" culminates in a vengeful and destructive final act, a violence that is not strictly personal but also structural. In other words, the plot of "sibling rivalry" does not simply convey a moral tale of jealousy but, through reference to a nationwide practice of lottery consumption, speaks to a broader context of economic inequality. Ghostly apparitions provide no redemptive solutions for inequality but further foreground the film's commentary on economic struggles and exploitations. The dead are manipulated by the living for economic gain the same way the characters exploit each other. While we might think of Do's horror films as belated additions to the vogue of Asian horror cinema, her work presents an admirable stride toward new possibilities of filmic expression in the communist state in which supernatural beliefs have been subject to state censorship.

Also screened at the Lao Studies Conference at Thammasat University was Xaisongkham's short film *Tok Khang (Those Below)*, 2016, a thesis project for his master's degree in film and video production from the City College of New York, under a Fulbright scholarship. Examining the traumatic consequences of the American covert bombing in Laos during the height of

Nok pays respect to a spirit house before leaving her the countryside to seek for fortune in the capital city of Vientiane. Screenshot from Mattie Do's Nong Hak (Dearest Sister)*, 2016.*

the Cold War, the film's simple narrative structure involves a trope of return, namely, that of an American veteran who returns to Laos in the aftermath of the war to redeem himself from his past guilt. The film's poster summarizes this dramatization of American guilt and moral responsibility in a sentence: *"Eventually you have to take care of those left behind and those left below."* The title "Those Below" signifies the explosive remains of war—undetonated munitions buried under the ground all over the Lao country. As remnants of war are associated with the Lao people ("those left behind"), the film makes explicit its demand for a historical recognition of wartime violence and its continuing repercussions.

During Xaisongkham's visit to Cornell last April, the Kahin Center was transformed into an ad hoc movie theater where members of the SEAP community such as Gregory Green, curator of the John M. Echols Collection on Southeast Asia; Matt Reeder, PhD candidate in history; Sirithorn Siriwan, PhD student in Asian Studies; Emiko Stock, PhD candidate in anthropology; Elizabeth Wijaya, PhD candidate in comparative literature; and Faizah Zakaria, postdoctoral fellow, had an opportunity to learn about Xaisongkham's work and the Lao film industry in general. The film screening event, sponsored by the Southeast Asia Program, was organized around the topic of the Cold War and the (im)possibility of return. Two short films, *Tok Khang* and *Kab Ban (A Long Way Home)*, 2018—one about the return of the American veteran and the other about the return of a young Lao in diaspora—offered a poetic meditation on the enduring impact of the Cold War. It was also Xaisongkham's first return to New York since his graduation from the City College of New York in 2015, this time to pitch his feature film project *Raising a Beast* at the Tribeca Film Festival. My reunion with Xaisongkham at Cornell can be considered a follow-up of our first meeting at the Lao Studies Conference in Bangkok, but it is also a prelude to the Sixth International Conference on Lao Studies, which will be held at Cornell from June 13 to 15, 2019.

The collective efforts of young Lao filmmakers such as Xaisongkham Induangchanthy, Anysay Keola, and Mattie Do have reinvigorated the landscape of Lao cinema. While the pioneering quality of their films is a result of a virtual absence of the film industry in Laos, the films' thematic focus and political import represent a significant departure from a postrevolutionary mode of filmmaking as well as their contemporary commercial counterpart in Laos. For example, from the 1960s to late 1980, Lao filmmakers, most of whom were trained at Vietnamese, Russian, or Central European schools such as Somchith Pholsena and Som Ock Southiponh, adhered to the doctrine of socialist realism, an ideology and aesthetic principle marked by the valorization of the working class, in their romanticized portrayals of revolutionary struggles and social changes. Somchith's *Sieng Puen Chak Thong Hai Hin (The Sound of Gunfire from the Plain of Jars)*, 1983, and Som Ock's *Boua Deng (Red Lotus)*, 1989, constitute a *locus classicus* of Lao socialist realist cinema instrumental to the communist state formation in the aftermath of the victory of the Lao Patriotic Front in 1975.[4] Differing from this postrevolutionary cinema, young filmmakers at the Lao New Wave Cinema offer more complex portraits of contemporary Lao society, tackling diverse and sometimes audacious topics such as religious beliefs, ethnic minoritization, and queer sexuality. Their dynamic and nuanced depictions of contemporary Laos also diverge from commercial films such as Sakchai Deenan's *Sabaidee, Luang Prabang (Good Morning, Luang Prabang)*, 2008; *Sabaidee 2 Mai Mi Khamtop Chak Pakse (From Pakse with Love)*, 2010; and *Sabaidee Wan Wiwa (Lao Wedding)*, 2011, the Lao-Thai coproduced trilogy in which regionalism and economic optimism are translated into fantasies of transborder intimacies, and in which Lao society and culture are often filtered through nostalgic and touristic visions.[5] Against such old and emerging currents, the Lao New Wave filmmakers are gradually and steadily transforming Lao cinema.

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1 Panivong Norindr, "The Future of Lao Cinema: The New Wave," *Visual Anthropology* 31, no. 1–2 (2018): 14–33.)

2 In Laos, a film script must be approved by the state before the director starts shooting the film.

3 In recent years, Hmong immigrants in the United States have begun to tell their history through film. See Ian Baird, "Chao Fa Movies: The Transnational Production of Hmong American History," *Hmong Studies Journal* 15, no. 1 (2014): 1–24.

4 See Som Ock Southiponh, "Starting an Asian Cinema: Laos Past and Present," https://www.yidff.jp/docbox/12/box12-3-e.html, accessed November 20, 2017. See also Scott Christopherson, "Lao Filmmakers Break Free from Their Cultural Chains," *Journal of Lao Studies* (2015): 98–112.

5 See Mariam Lam, "The Postcolonial Condition of 'Indochinese' Cinema from Viet Nam, Cambodia, and Laos," in *Postcolonial Cinema Studies*, ed. Sandra Ponzanesi and Marguerite Waller (New York: Routledge, 2011), 107–25; and Chairat Polmuk, "Labor of Love: Intimacy and Biopolitics in a Thai-Burmese Romance," in *Border Twists and Burma Trajectories: Perceptions, Reforms, and Adaptation*, ed. Samak Kosem with a foreword by Magnus Fiskesjö (Chiang Mai: Center for ASEAN Studies, Chiang Mai University, 2016), 299–319.

Sounding Out the State of Indonesian Music

One of the hallmarks of much Indonesian music is its profound ensemble nature. There are, to be sure, plenty of instances of solo musicians, ranging from the ubiquitous guitar-toting *ngamén* (buskers), who hop on and off buses in search of spare change from captive audiences of commuters, to concert pianists like Ananda Sukarlan. The Indonesian music industry has cultivated and celebrated its own individual celebrities—from the heyday of Radio Republik Indonesia's Bintang Radio (Radio Stars) in the 1950s to the more recent competition franchises represented by Indonesian Idol—and also co-opted and capitalized on the emergence of others such as the king of dangdut, Rhoma Irama, or Inul Daratista, with her sensational *goyang* (gyrating). These examples are, however, either exceptions or relatively recent departures from a more deeply seated impulse to make music in groups. The groups may be small, as with the pairing of a singer and a flute player in Minangkabau *saluang*, or large, as with gamelan, or even truly colossal, in the case of the mass performances by hundreds of *angklung*-playing school children in Bandung. They may be formalized, as with choirs (*paduan suara*), or spontaneous, as when a group of youth sing along with a friend strumming a guitar. In all cases, what is prioritized is the social value of making music together, and of bringing people together.

Above: Ngudi Raras performing in Willard Straight Hall for Indo Night 2018.

...to foster a sense of community, not just between scholars, but more broadly among those with various involvements in Indonesian music.

by Christopher J. Miller,
senior lecturer, music

The structure of academia puts a premium on individual achievement, even as the work of individuals draws deeply upon exchange and interaction. Sounding Out the State of Indonesian Music, held at Cornell's Ithaca campus this past March 29–31, did what was expected of a State of the Field conference—the fourth in an ongoing series of the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project—by highlighting the contributions of notable individual scholars of Indonesian music. The forthcoming collected volume (from Southeast Asia Program Publications) will do the same.[1]

No less important a mission, however, was to foster a sense of community, not just between scholars, but more broadly among those with various involvements in Indonesian music. The conference sought to sound out the state of Indonesian music, both as a subject of scholarly inquiry and as an artistic practice pursued within and beyond Indonesia. Those who work primarily as scholars of Indonesian music, mostly within the field of ethnomusicology, were joined by others in, around, and outside academia who work primarily as practitioners: performers, composers, ensemble directors, and promoters.

Each of these constituencies was highlighted in different aspects of the conference, but the mix of presentations, roundtables, and performances also built on overlap and connections and drew attention to how many attendees play various roles in the field. Thus, on the first day of the conference, the six members of Ngudi Raras, a group of touring gamelan musicians making a stop at Cornell on their American tour, not only performed, but in an opening roundtable, held in Indonesian, also shared their perspectives on the challenges that face freelance musicians in present-day Central Java. The ensuing discussion involved other conference attendees, most prominently fellow gamelan musicians working in academia: Sumarsam and I. M. Harjito, who have taught for decades at Wesleyan University, and Danis Sugiyanto, a faculty member of Institut Seni Indonesia (Indonesia Institute of the Arts) Surakarta, who is in the United States as a visiting Fulbright Scholar. These three then joined Ngudi Raras for the duration of their performance that evening—which, in partnership with the Cornell Indonesian Association, took the form of a *klenèngan* and night market, with food and ample room for socializing that managed to recreate the relaxed and expansive atmosphere in which gamelan music is typically encountered in Java. Other conference attendees joined the Cornell Gamelan Ensemble in playing two opening pieces and augmenting the Javanese master musicians on two other pieces.

The next two days witnessed similar minglings and swappings of hats. I Nyoman Catra, a renowned master of Balinese *topeng* (masked) theater with a PhD from Wesleyan, joined Julia Byl and Elizabeth Clendinning for a panel on Musical Communities. Sumarsam joined Jennifer Fraser and Anne Rasmussen for a panel on Music, Religion, and Civil Society. A panel on Popular Musics started with pioneering scholar Jeremy Wallach and continued with Danis Sugiyanto, this time as a participant-observer of *kroncong* in the United States, and Rebekah Moore, who recently returned to American academia after a decade working in music management and production in Indonesia. Vocalist and composer/improviser Jessika Kenney joined Bethany Collier, Christina Sunardi, and Henry Spiller for a panel on Music, Gender, and Sexuality.

For a roundtable on Sound Beyond/As Music, Christopher J. Miller joined Jompet Kuswidananto, a visual artist who works extensively with sound, whose video left the audience speechless, and Dimitri della Faille, a scholar of international development who has observed Indonesia's burgeoning noise music scene as a fellow practitioner. A roundtable on Priorities in Practice brought together I Putu Tangkas Adi Hiranmayena, who grew up performing Balinese gamelan and dance with his family in Colorado and is now a doctoral student in ethnomusicology; Matt Dunning, the driving force behind America's newest gamelan ensemble in Buffalo, New York; Andrew Timar, who among other pursuits founded the Evergreen Club Contemporary Gamelan, Canada's first gamelan performing group; and Jody Diamond, who in running the American Gamelan Institute, editing and publishing the journal *Balungan*, and running the gamelan email list has played a key role in fostering community among scholars and practitioners of Indonesian performing arts in North America and beyond. Jessika Kenney, Darsono Hadiraharjo, Maho Ishiguro, and Sri Mulyana performed a moving tribute to Hadiraharjo's and Mulyana's father, Pak Saguh, on Friday afternoon. That evening, attendees gathered to hear Danis Sugiyanto and conference co-organizer Andrew McGraw play with Rumput, the *kroncong* group Sugiyanto focused on in his presentation; an improvisation based on Rumput's closing song, "Yen Ing Tawang," performed by Kenney, Hadiraharjo, Sugiyanto, Miller, and Timar; a solo piece for *suling gambuh* by Timar; and an improvisation with amplified and digital instruments played by Szkieve (della Faille) and CAGE (Miller with Kevin Ernste).

The conference concluded with a keynote lecture by Philip Yampolsky, whose somewhat unconventional career, at least in terms of sequence, epitomizes what we had in mind in how we defined the field—as Indonesian music, rather than Indonesian music scholarship. After starting his doctorate at the University of Washington, a detour took him out of academia to what is conventionally called "applied" work: researching, recording, and producing the monumental *Music of Indonesia* series of twenty CDs for Smithsonian Folkways and the Masyarakat Seni Pertunjukan Indonesia (Society for Indonesian Performing Arts), and then staying on in Indonesia as the Program Officer for Arts and Culture in the Jakarta office of the Ford Foundation. He returned to the United States and reentered academia's orbit as the founding director of the Robert E. Brown Center for World Music at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and then finally, after retiring from that post, completed his dissertation on music and media in the Dutch East Indies. The project Yampolsky reported on in his talk, researching the representation of Indonesian regional music and theater on VCD, exhibited the comprehensiveness that has characterized so many of his undertakings. The appreciation among the other attendees for Yampolsky's dedication, patience, and resolve in carrying out a kind of work that the demand for theoretical inventiveness and the race against the tenure clock conspire against, was palpable. What emerged more explicitly in the discussion was just how many of those present chose the directions they did because of the inspiration and insight they found in Yampolsky's contributions.

Below top: Sri Mulyana and Maho Ishiguro performing a Tribute to Pak Saguh in the Johnson Museum of Art, with Elizabeth Clendinning, Jody Diamond, and I Nyoman Catra listening. Below bottom: Rebekah Moore, Jennifer Fraser, Andrew McGraw, Jeremy Wallach, and Philip Yampolsky.

All conferences offer an opportunity for participants to maintain and renew connections. For those who regularly attend the annual meetings of the Society for Ethnomusicology and often share panels, Sounding Out the State of Indonesian Music allowed for more sustained interaction in a more intimate setting. What I found most gratifying as an organizer was witnessing connections between those involved in different facets of the field. Some of these go way back, as in the case of Philip Yampolsky and Jody Diamond, who first met as undergraduates. Others were brand new, as in the case of Julia Byl and Jessika Kenney, or myself, Jompet Kuswidananto, and Dimitri della Faille. Overall, the conference succeeded in fostering a deeper appreciation of just how much, even with our differing priorities and attentions, we share the common cause of furthering the understanding and ongoing existence of Indonesian music.

Sounding Out the State of Indonesian Music was jointly organized by the Southeast Asia Program and the Department of Music at Cornell University, with support from the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, the American Institute for Indonesian Studies, the Comparative Muslim Societies Program, and the Sound Arts and Science Initiative. The *klenèngan* and night market were produced as Indo Night 2018 in partnership with the Cornell Indonesian Association, and funded in part by the Cornell Council for the Arts and the Consulate General of the Republic of Indonesia in New York City.

[1] Miller, Christopher J. and Andrew C. McGraw, editors. *Sounding Out the State of Indonesian Music.* Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program Publications, forthcoming.

For more details see the conference website: blogs.cornell.edu/soundingoutindonesianmusic/schedule

KEYNOTE LECTURE:
"Indonesian Regional Music in Commercial Media: Inclusion, Exclusion, Fusion"

Philip Yampolsky, National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow; Founding Director (retired), Robert E. Brown Center for World Music, University of Illinois

PANEL 1: Present-Day Pangrawit

Roundtable with members of Ngudi Raras: Wakidi Dwidjomartono, Mulyani Soepono, Darsono Hadiraharjo, Paimin, Sularno Martowiyono, Sri Mulyana

PANEL 2: Musical Communities

Julia Byl, University of Alberta, "Playing by the Numbers: Harmonic Egalitarianism in Toba Liquor Stands and Studios"

I Nyoman Catra, College of the Holy Cross, "Current State of Sanggar in Bali"

Elizabeth Clendinning, Wake Forest University, "Beyond the Banjar: Academia, Community, and Gamelans in America"

PANEL 3: Music, Religion, and Civil Society

Jennifer Fraser, Oberlin College and Conservatory, "Singing Naked Verses: Interactive Intimacies and Islamic Moralities in Saluang Performances in West Sumatra"

Anne Rasmussen, College of William and Mary, "The Politicization of Melody: Religious Musical Performance and the Indonesian Culture Wars of 2017"

Sumarsam, Wesleyan University, "Traditional Performing Arts in the North Coast of Java From Texts to Invocation"

PANEL 4: Sound Beyond/As Music

Christopher J. Miller, Cornell University, "Exceptional/Unexceptional: Sound Exploration and the Ingrained in Indonesian Musik Kontemporer"

Dimitri della Faille, l'Université du Québec en Outaouais, "Noise Music, Experimental Music, and Sound Art in Indonesia: An Anticolonial and Feminist Approach"

Jompet Kuswidananto, Independent Artist, "After Voices"

PANEL 5: Popular Musics

Jeremy Wallach, Bowling Green State University, "Twenty Years of Popular Music in the Era of Reformasi: Reflections of an Anti-Anti-Essentialist"

Danis Sugiyanto, Institut Seni Indonesia Surakarta, "Keroncong Takes Root in the United States"

Rebekah Moore, Northeastern University, "Bunga Liar (Wildflowers): Rock Music and Eco Activism in Bali"

Christopher J. Miller, Szkieve, and Kevin Ernste, performing in Lincoln Hall.

PANEL 6: Music, Gender, and Sexuality

Bethany Collier, Bucknell University, "Even Stronger Yet!": Gender and Influence in Balinese Youth Arja"

Christina Sunardi, University of Washington, "Approaching the Magnetic Power of Femaleness through Cross-Gender Dance Performance in Malang, East Java"

Henry Spiller, University of California at Davis, "A Prolegomenon to Female Rampak Kendang (choreographed group drumming) in West Java, Indonesia"

Jessika Kenney, California Institute of the Arts, "Singing as Transcultural Islamic Feminist Exegesis"

PANEL 7: Priorities in Practice

Andrew Timar, Independent Musician, "North of Java: My 35-Year Gamelan Career in Toronto, Canada"

I Putu Tangkas Adi Hiranmayena, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, "'Fix Your Face': Performing Attitudes between Heavy Metal and Baleganjur"

Jody Diamond, Bucknell University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, "Close Encounters: Creating the First Gamelan Experience"

Matt Dunning, Independent Musician, "There's a Gamelan in . . . Buffalo??"

Kings and Dictators

The Legacy of Monarchy and the New Authoritarianism in Asia

by Sebastian Dettman,
PhD candidate, government

Some of the participants and presenters gathered outside the Kahin Center during the conference.

While only tiny Brunei, on the island of Borneo, remains an absolute monarchy today, Asia's royalty still exert considerable symbolic and political power in both democratic and non-democratic systems. Why have Asia's monarchies remained relevant in the modern age? How do they draw from real or reimagined historical pasts? These were some of the questions unpacked during the symposium Kings and Dictators: The Legacy of Monarchy and the New Authoritarianism in Asia, held at the Kahin Center in April 2018.

Jointly arranged by Cornell's South Asia Program, Southeast Asia Program, East Asia Program, and the Comparative Muslim Societies Program, the symposium brought together scholars from the United States, Europe, and Asia. The methodologies, time periods, and disciplinary backgrounds of the speakers were diverse, but all were concerned with understanding the roots and contemporary relevance of Asia's royal systems. Over the course of two days of panel sessions and group discussions, the speakers and attendees explored interconnected themes of kingship and its relationship to contemporary democratic and authoritarian politics.

One persistent theme throughout the symposium was the importance of historical legitimation to present-day political projects by politicians and leaders of all stripes. James Laine, professor of religious studies at Macalester College, discussed the centrality of the heroic king Shivaji for Hindu nationalist politicians and the emergence of alternative narratives in modern India. Cornell University's Thak Chaloemtiarana, professor in the Department of Asian Studies, described the shifting paradigms of kingship in Thailand, demonstrating how the modern Thai monarchy draws on a fusion of historical roles of the king as a semi-divine and paternalistic figure. Magnus Fiskesjö, associate professor of anthropology at Cornell, examined how the growing centralization of power and status around China's current President Xi Jinping hearkens back to the "mystified separate status" of the emperors of the country's former dynasties. Kaja McGowan, associate professor in the Department of History of Art and Visual Studies at Cornell, demonstrated how modern-day communities on the Indonesian islands of Lombok and Bali seek to link criminal policing and political behavior to historical queens and female deities.

Another commonality across the presentations was the rejuvenation of monarchical symbols and monarchs to back claims of electoral and political legitimacy. Would-be dictators seek to imitate royal claims to divine right or a higher mandate. Astrid Norén-Nilsson, associate senior lecturer at the Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies at Lund University, described recent moves by Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia to claim commonality with the sixteenth-century King Sdech Kan in order to consolidate power and ban the opposition. Geethika Dharmasinghe, PhD candidate in the Department of Asian Studies at Cornell, examined attempts by the former president of Sri Lanka, Mahinda Rajapaksa, to adopt old traditions of kingship into a new fusion of "paternalistic Buddhist kingship" to maneuver back to power. In my presentation, I analyzed how both Malaysia's ruling coalition, along with its opposition parties, have sought to appeal to the country's royal families (known as the Malay Rulers) as public institutions have been increasingly subverted for authoritarian ends.

These and other presentations sparked a number of important debates and discussions. A thought-provoking presentation by Milinda Banerjee, assistant professor at Presidency University, noted that South Asian nationalists sought to use the monarchy as a tool of liberation rather than authoritarian entrenchment, arguing that "everyone is king...everyone is divine." Under what conditions can monarchical institutions generate new forms of inclusion or belonging rather than provide legitimacy for authoritarian rulers?

Another interesting line of discussion was broached during the presentation by Pamela Crossley, professor of history, Asian studies, and Middle Eastern studies at Dartmouth College. In drawing links from monarchs in Asia's history to the present day, she reminded us of the different social, political, and technological environments between the two periods. Modern monarchs and dictators arguably wield much more power and coercive control than their predecessors by broadcasting their message through Facebook, as Cambodia's Hun Sen does, or relying on modern state institutions such as the King of Thailand.

The strength of the conference ultimately came from the sheer diversity of presentations on different time periods, countries, and regions in Asia. But, perhaps reflecting my disciplinary bias as a political scientist, it seems the next step would be to develop a common conceptual vocabulary to understand the political role or effects of monarchy.

...South Asian nationalists sought to use the monarchy as a tool of liberation rather than authoritarian entrenchment, arguing that "everyone is king...everyone is divine."

For example, while contemporary Asia is dense with both kings and dictators, they are embedded within distinct types of political regimes. Malaysia's monarchs (at least until recently) were largely subsumed within a strong authoritarian infrastructure, while Thailand's monarchy wields much greater power beyond formal legal and political institutions. We can understand more about the potency and power of kingship in today's Asia by examining whether monarchs rule through institutions, or in defiance of them.

Another way to build on the cross-country comparison throughout the conference would be to understand how monarchs are situated in relation to relevant issues or cleavages in society. Some kingships are tightly intertwined with ethnic or religious identities, while others draw power from their ability to transcend sectarian divides. These relationships offer different raw material for both kings and dictators in their attempts to gain or maintain power.

The symposium proved that the study of monarchy is fertile ground across discipline and region. The diverse work showcased at the Kahin Center shows that Asia's kings remain powerful political and social actors in the modern age.

STATEMAKERS: Monarchy and Authority in Asia

by Jeffrey Petersen, Southeast Asia librarian

Kingship is a divine position, reflecting power and glory from a higher supernatural force. As such, it inherently invokes authority—the right to rule. If the heavens decree that a given king is meant to rule, who can disagree? Small wonder that even in the current world of nation-states, modern leaders will draw on the imagery and symbolism of mystic rulers from earlier times to bolster their own image of power and authority.

In conjunction with the April 2018 symposium Kings and Dictators: The Legacy of Monarchy and the New Authoritarianism in Asia, the Kroch Library's exhibit *Statemakers: Monarchy and Authority in Asia* explored the notions of kingship and authority in Asia, examining kingly symbols of power vested in regalia and stories, displays of mystification, and instances of continuity in the use of these symbols and gestures between past and present rulers. The curators and librarians of Kroch Library's Division of Asia Collections highlighted various areas in Asia that aligned with these themes.

Gregory Green, curator of the Echols Collection on Southeast Asia, focused on the country of Laos. For over six hundred years, the Lao people lived with some kind of royalty ruling over them. Whether it was direct rule by a single royal family, faction of that family based in more local power centers, or foreign powers propping up the weakened kings of the modern era, the Lao royals ruled in one way or another. That was until the end of the Second Indochina War, also known as the Vietnam War, when the royal family of Laos finally met a foe determined to eradicate them from the land. The communist takeover of Laos led to a new kind of "royalty" and a determined push to transfer power from a six-hundred-year-old monarchy. To accomplish this goal, the royal family and mid- to high-level military and civilian leaders were sent to reeducation/labor centers called "seminar camps." Those of the royal family who did not escape the country before the arrests did not survive the camps. The Communist Party leaders now have statues erected in their honor in a similar fashion as the kings of old.

Aparna Ghosh, administrative supervisor of the Echols Collection, highlighted the influence of King Shivaji (1674–80) in India. King Shivaji is revered as a hero of seventeenth-century India, and he is often portrayed as a warrior king who established a Hindu Maratha state during a time when the Mughal kings dominated India.[1] Shivaji's legend has grown over the years, and his story has been written and rewritten to help in the creation of a nationalist Hindu Indian identity. Nowhere is this more blatant than in the formation of the group Shiv Sena (translation: "Shivaji's Army"), under the leadership of Bal Thackeray (1966–2012). In the present day, Shivaji's image as a Marathi king lends itself well to the group's own image. Shiv Sena has adopted a hard-line, far-right, Hindu nationalist agenda and has often been accused of inciting violence and moral policing.

For insular Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and East Timor) focus was placed on President Suharto (1968–98) of Indonesia and earlier Javanese rules. Suharto cultivated close connections with past rulers and their emphasis on personal modesty, refinement, and the disciplined control of emotions. Although not exhibited through the bravado that some rulers display, the power that he possessed was believed to be both real and mystical. Suharto was said to have consulted indigenous religious practitioners (the dukun), bathed in water from a lake on the sacred Mt. Lawu, and slept over a sacred manuscript to convey the relevant sacred power that he drew on.

The Philippines, although influenced by ancient Hindu-Buddhist traditions, was outside the zone of explicit Hindu-Buddhist state formation found elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, complex chiefdoms developed in the Philippines. Even in the absence of large enduring monuments or temples that are often associated with royalty, the basic structure of the symbolic worlds that kings elsewhere inhabit can still be found there. Kings typically present themselves as a living link that connects the heavenly world to the world we live in. In the Philippines, as with shamans generally, local religious practitioners (such as the Babaylan) represented a living axis mundi that connected the upper and lower worlds, just as a temple would represent a similar static link. This is one reason the Babaylan and other such practitioners were sometimes transgender: they would extend and bridge different categories or worlds. The early chiefs of the Philippines would exhibit great strength and fighting prowess, as can be seen in Lapu-Lapu (1521), a Philippine chief who killed Magellan in his attempt to circumnavigate the world. Some leaders in the Philippines today still draw on a model of strength and power. Joseph Estrada was an action hero movie star who became president (1998–2001). President Ferdinand Marcos (1965–86) was another strong figure who referenced his legacy as a soldier during World War II. Despite his modern image, he had a traditional Philippine amulet implanted in his back for a source of power. Current president Rodrigo Duterte (2016–) has also molded a strong masculine image, one more such figure in a long tradition of rulers in the Philippines.

For the East Asia section of the exhibit, Curator Liren Zheng explored the legacy of the first emperor of China and the model that this figure presented for later rulers, both in China and in the region. Curator Daniel McKee highlighted the remarkable myths and uncomfortable realities of the Japanese Imperial family.

Awareness of the way that modern rulers draw on echoes of the past and symbols of authority can help us understand our world today. Earlier notions of what a ruler is and how they behave have not gone extinct or become irrelevant.

[1] A Maratha state would be a state for the Marathi people who are an ethnolinguistic group that speaks the Marathi language.

SEAP Outreach Sponsors Cornell Student-led Project for **Refugee Service** Organization in Utica, NY

by Anna Callahan, former SEAP outreach graduate assistant, master's student in city and regional planning, class of 2018

SEAP continues to support refugees and the organizations that facilitate their resettlement. In spring 2018, ...

Midtown Utica Community Center at 40 Faxton Street, formerly the All Saints Episcopal Church.

...SEAP Outreach sponsored a Cornell student-led design team project to produce a master plan for redesigning the space that houses a post-resettlement refugee organization in Utica, New York, called Midtown Utica Community Center (MUCC). Established in 2003 by Chris Sunderlin, MUCC aims to foster inclusive community participation through educational, cultural, and social programming in an effort to fill the gap in refugee-services and programming left after the 90-day service cut off at the Mohawk Valley Resource Center, which assists recent refugee arrivals. Once described as a downtrodden Rust Belt town, Utica, since 1981, has been host to more than 15,000 resettled refugees coming from Myanmar, Vietnam, Somalia, Russia, and elsewhere—earning the city the moniker, "The Town That Loves Refugees." Since its creation, MUCC has become a social hub for the Cornhill/Midtown Utica neighborhood and a pillar within the broader Utica community.

The mission of MUCC is to build and provide a multicultural, refugee-friendly space that welcomes all types of users and encompasses all types of programming. Community members—or MUCCsters, as they call themselves—use the center for tutoring sessions, robotics club, dance practice, among other activities. Last year, Sunderlin, MUCC's executive director, and Kathryn Stam, SEAP faculty associate in research as well as chair of MUCC's board of directors and professor at SUNY Polytechnic Institute (SUNY IT), spoke at the Internationalization and Inclusion: Refugees in Community Colleges conference, hosted by Cornell on the campus of Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, New York. Stam spoke about "Refugees Starting Over in Utica," a SUNY IT-based collaborative project that highlights refugee contributions and brings students and community members together through events, volunteer work, and social media.

In Fall 2017, MUCC enlisted Design Connect, a multidisciplinary, student-run, student-led community design orga-

Above: Utica team with Midtown Utica Community Center members at the Design Connect Final Review Presentation on May 11, 2018 in Sibley Hall at Cornell. Right: Midtown Utica Community Center main entrance.

nization from Cornell, to produce a master plan and needs assessment for their property at 40 Faxton Street, a former Episcopal church. Formed in 2008, Design Connect applies participatory planning principles to support nonprofits and municipalities in Upstate New York. Design Connect strives to meaningfully engage communities to produce planning and design solutions in a collaborative, sustainable, and democratic manner. The ten-person team working in Utica drew students from across disciplines, including four city and regional planning graduate students, three historic preservation graduate students, two urban and regional studies undergraduates; and one public administration graduate student. The team was led by project manager and former SEAP Outreach graduate assistant, Anna Callahan, city and regional planning.

The odd-shaped 10,859-square-foot parcel at 40 Faxton Street spans two streets (Faxton and Scott) and is comprised of two buildings joined by a narrow opening in the middle of the buildings. Over the last three years, the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York let MUCC operate out of the building for free. In 2017, after receiving a three-year, quarter-million grant from the Community Foundation of Oneida and Herkimer Counties, MUCC was able to finally purchase the building and transform the building into its own space.

Throughout the spring semester, the student team researched the site, collected design precedents, and spoke with various key stakeholders in interviews and at community meetings. Through this community engagement, the team learned about the typical and desired uses for each space and received input on the initial drafts of the design concept. The team ultimately produced a master plan that would support MUCC's mission to operate as a successful multicultural center and continue serving Utica's refugee and low-income population. In addition to a master plan design concept, the team developed designs for specific spaces in the building, including the kitchen, multipurpose rooms, and office spaces.

The multipurpose room and kitchen are the social hubs of MUCC where the majority of programs are held, dance groups practice, and MUCCsters socialize. Upstairs, students hang-out, receive help with academics, and participate in the robotics club. In the former worship hall and smaller chapel, various religious groups still use the spaces to gather for prayer and religious services.

Many of the changes suggested by the team built upon these existing uses with the intention to enhance the potential flexibility of each space. Further, many of the team's suggestions capitalized on the supportive community fostered by MUCC, encouraging sweat equity to implement the design elements. While MUCC ramps up fundraising efforts, the community can continue to use the building as they are currently.

Conference Touts the Value of Education...

Left to right: Bryan Duff, director of the Minor in Education program at Cornell. Lin Lin, associate professor of social studies education at SUNY Cortland School of Education. Susan Cerretani, professor of English at Tompkins Cortland Community College.

In mid-March, the Going Global: Leveraging Resources for International Education conference, held on the Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3) campus, brought together a variety of stakeholders committed to global learning. The purpose of the conference was to discuss ways in which area studies programs can serve educators, administrators, and libraries as hubs for internationalization at K-12 schools, community colleges, universities, and other organizations. Driving all conference presentations and panels was the shared understanding that schools and institutions of higher education have a collective responsibility to train students on what it means to be a global citizen and equip them with the skills they will need to live and work in an increasingly connected world.

Sponsored by Cornell University's Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies as well as Cornell's Southeast Asia Program (SEAP) and the Cornell-Syracuse South Asia Consortium, using Title VI funding from US Department of Education National Resource Center grants, the conference lineup included Carina Caldwell of Community Colleges for International Development as the keynote speaker, followed by panels on short-term study abroad and lasting curricular impact, internationalizing teacher education programs, workforce readiness and global education, and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and other distance-learning platforms.

In her keynote address, Caldwell emphasized the value of job skills such as intercultural competency, curiosity, flexibility, and problem-solving over computer skills in the twenty-first century and how eighty percent of companies believe that business would increase if employees had international experience. Community colleges are hubs for international students and new Americans to get a US education because of their affordability and vocational focus. Caldwell mentioned one community college in Arizona that contributes $7 million to the local economy because of the number of students who enter the workforce once they graduate, many of whom come from different cultural backgrounds. In addition to their economic impact, these students create a campus climate rich with cultural diversity. This increasing multicultural demographic at community colleges opens the opportunity for American students to gain experience in cross-cultural communication and exposure to global perspectives by interacting with peers from other countries.

Another way for students to gain cross-cultural experiences is through study abroad programs, which tend to be small at community colleges due to budget constraints and limited resources. However, partnering with institutions that have robust study abroad programs is one way to help students at community colleges gain access to international experiences. In reflecting on the value of institutional partnerships that provide short-term study abroad opportunities for students, faculty members from Tompkins Cortland Community College, Onondaga Community College, and Cornell University provided several anecdotes about their students' experiences during and after trips abroad. These narratives highlighted student growth prompted by exchanging diverse perspectives with local citizens and nongovernmental organizations in foreign countries. They also mentioned how students often become motivated post-study abroad to learn new languages and usually return home advocating the value of global learning.

Faculty members from community colleges and schools of education lauded the professional development opportunities they benefited from partnering with area studies programs at Cornell and Syracuse University to develop courses with short-term global travel. They spoke of the steps they took to internationalize their curricula, including attending area studies workshops to further their knowledge of specific countries and initiating pen-pal exchanges with students and faculty in other countries.

Lin Lin, associate professor of social studies education at SUNY Cortland's

"Going Global"

by Brenna Fitzgerald,
SEAP communications
and outreach coordinator

Left to right: Kaja McGowan, former SEAP director, speaks on the short-term study abroad panel. Thamora Fishel, associate director of SEAP. Christine G. Sharkey, vice president of Corning Enterprises and director of community development.

School of Education, spoke about her trip to Sri Lanka with Cornell South Asia program manager, Daniel Bass, and how valuable it was to have a person fluent in the language and knowledgeable about the country with her for logistical support and deeper cultural exposure. She plans to incorporate comparative research on education in Sri Lanka into her education courses in the hopes of widening the perspectives of future teachers.

Similarly, Bryan Duff, director of the Minor in Education program at Cornell University, traveled to Myanmar with Cornell's Southeast Asia Program's associate director, Thamora Fishel, as part of his professional development and preparation for team-teaching a course on education in Asia with SEAP's former director, Kaja McGowan. In reflecting on his experiences in Myanmar, Duff echoed Caldwell, noting how "technical expertise won't solve most of our intractable problems." Instead, he asserted the need for students to build empathy and exposure to diverse perspectives through international education.

Speakers on the COIL and distance-learning panel championed leveraging technology for global engagement. Facebook, Whatsapp, Zoom, Blackboard, and Google Hangouts were cited as useful tools in facilitating cross-cultural class activities. From New York to Egypt, educators spoke of the ease with which students across cultures could connect with each other through various distance-learning platforms. Angela Martin, chair and instructor of English as a Second Language and foreign language at TC3, spoke of the increased appreciation for diverse perspectives she noticed in her students who participated in her COIL course and the value of this mindset for working in a multicultural and connected world.

The panel on workforce readiness and global education facilitated by Heather Singmaster, associate director of the Center for Global Education at Asia Society, a nonprofit educational organiation, resulted in a lively discussion by speakers in education, administration, and business. They explored the merits of equipping students with cultural competencies before they enter the workforce and discussed what skills these competencies translate to—namely, communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, enthusiasm, empathy, networking, interpersonal skills, and teamwork.

"It's not difficult to find new hires with technical training. It is hard to find those with professional skills in communication and relationship-building," said Christine Sharkey, vice president of Corning Enterprises and director of community development. She talked about how communication skills have always been a high priority in Corning Inc.'s hiring process and that candidates who cannot relate well to people, especially to people they don't know, are not valuable to the organization.

Such critical qualities as nimble communication and interpersonal skills, also deemed "marketable" by the US Department of Labor, can be acquired through cross-cultural interaction. While underscoring that closing the skills gap is a responsibility of students, schools, and employers, the speakers on the workforce readiness panel praised community colleges as centers of global activity and cross-cultural interaction. For many new Americans and American citizens, the community college is where they start their higher education and careers as well as connect to people of other cultures, often for the first time.

Throughout the conference, educators and administers alike grappled with difficult questions such as how to think through and address uncomfortable global/cultural experiences. Andrew Wilford, professor of anthropology at Cornell, wondered how a place like Cornell, with a history of immersing students in area studies, can bring culture alive so that it is not just a box that is checked but becomes "a learning process, something in motion." Helping students build empathy, self-reflect, and think beyond comfortable perspectives were agreed upon global learning outcomes and goals for internationalizing curricula.

From left to right: Professor Wendy Wolford, vice provost for international affairs. Dr. Uttiyo Raychaudhuri, executive director of the Office of Global Learning. Dr. Angelika Kraemer, director of the Language Resource Center (LRC).

New Leadership for SEAP's Core Campus Partners

This is a period of **exciting new developments** on campus related to global learning and language study.

by Thamora Fishel,
SEAP associate director

Professor Wendy Wolford, who was appointed vice provost for international affairs in the spring, is providing dynamic new leadership and has been building a fantastic team to carry out the mission of Global Cornell. As part of the Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, SEAP will have the opportunity to work closely with Professor Wolford as she steps into the additional role of interim director of the Einaudi Center, while a search for a new director takes place. Wolford's background as a faculty member in development sociology and her grounding in area studies bodes well for SEAP as the program reaffirms its commitments to languages, field research, and broad comparative and interdisciplinary perspectives.

SEAP is also working closely with the newly established Office of Global Learning, which just opened its doors in a freshly renovated Caldwell Hall. The office is poised to provide expert support for students and faculty coming from and going to Southeast Asia and the rest of the globe. Integrating the services of what were formerly called "Cornell Abroad" and the "International Students and Scholars Office," the Office of Global Learning will improve and expand Cornell's ability to support the global learning needs of the campus community. **Dr. Uttiyo Raychaudhuri,** executive director of the Office of Global Learning, joined Cornell in April 2018. He previously directed Clemson Abroad in the Office of Global Engagement at Clemson University. A trained architect, Uttiyo holds a PhD in forestry and natural resources from University of Georgia. SEAP will be able to draw on his experience promoting global citizenship, environmental justice, and international engagement, particularly in relation to our expanding roster of undergraduate field experiences and global engagement opportunities such as Cornell in Cambodia, Global Citizenship and Sustainability in Borneo, and Climate Change Awareness and Service-Learning in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam.

We are also excited to welcome **Dr. Angelika Kraemer** as the new director of the Language Resource Center (LRC). Kraemer comes to Cornell from the Center for Language Teaching Advancement at Michigan State University, where she led initiatives to share "the transformative power of language" and connecting across cultures. Last fall, SEAP had the honor of holding the first major conference in the newly relocated and redesigned LRC space, which is now on the ground floor of Stimson Hall. The high-tech classrooms designed to support video-conference instruction are not only invaluable for the shared course initiative through which Cornell sends and receives language classes in partnership with Columbia and Yale, but SEAP has also used the facility for collaborative meetings with other Southeast Asia centers to support language pedagogy. This fall the LRC will host the Philippines seminar taught by visiting faculty member (and SEAP alumnus) Jerry Finin, who plans to have scholars from around the world, and especially the Philippines, join the class for guest lectures and discussion.

New and forthcoming titles from

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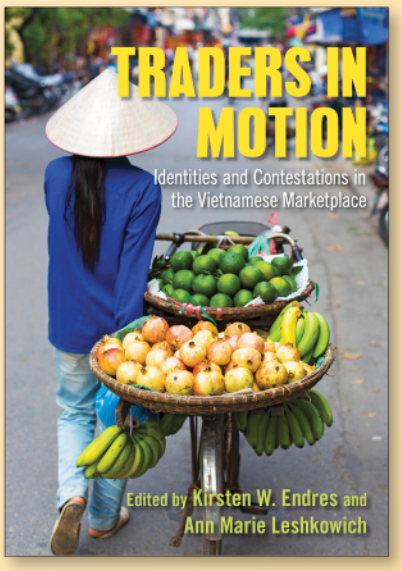


TRADERS IN MOTION

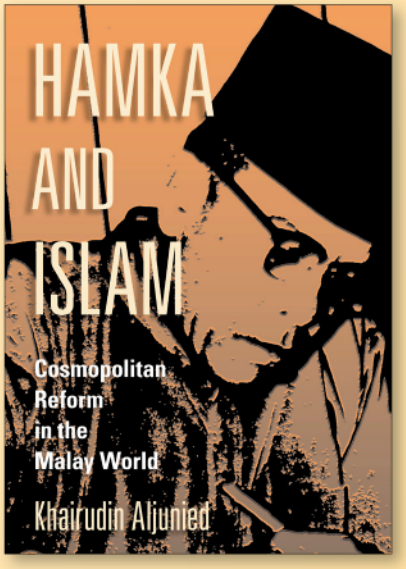
Identities and Contestations in the Vietnamese Marketplace

EDITED BY KIRSTEN W. ENDRES & ANN MARIE LESHKOWICH

$23.95 PAPERBACK

With essays covering diverse topics, from seafood trade across the Vietnam-China border, to street traders in Hanoi, to gold shops in Ho Chi Minh City, *Traders in Motion* spans the fields of economic and political anthropology, geography, and sociology to illuminate how Vietnam's rapidly expanding market economy is formed and transformed by everyday interactions among traders, suppliers, customers, family members, neighbors, and officials.

Contributors: Lisa Barthelmes, Christine Bonnin, Gracia Clark, Annuska Derks, Kirsten W. Endres, Chris Gregory, Caroline Grillot, Erik Harms, Esther Horat, Gertrud Hüwelmeier, Ann Marie Leshkowich, Hy Van Luong, Minh T. N. Nguyen, Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh, Linda J. Seligmann, Allison Truitt, Sarah Turnerback



HAMKA AND ISLAM

Cosmopolitan Reform in the Malay World

KHAIRUDIN ALJUNIED

$23.95 PAPERBACK

Since the early twentieth century, Muslim reformers have been campaigning for a total transformation of the ways in which Islam is imagined. The author Haji Abdullah Malik Abdul Karim Amrullah, commonly known as "Hamka," is one of the most influential. In *Hamka and Islam*, Khairudin Aljunied describes Hamka's attempt to harmonize the many streams of Islamic and Western thought while posing solutions to the various challenges facing Muslims in the Malay world. *Hamka and Islam* pushes the boundaries of the expanding literature on Muslim reformism by grounding its analysis within the Malay world experience and offering a novel attempt to build a concept—"cosmopolitan reform"—that will be of service to researchers across the world.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

October 12-13, 2018

18th Northeast Conference on Indonesia
Jokonomics Across the Archipelago: Lived Economies of Indonesia, Cornell University

Keynote Speaker: Francisia SSE Seda, MA, PhD, professor of gender and economic change sociology, Department of Sociology, University of Indonesia.

October 26-27, 2018

Tea High and Low: Elixir, Exploitation, and Ecology
Cross-Asia Conference, Cornell University

This interdisciplinary conference explores the cultural, religious, botanical, economic, and environmental dimensions of the global spread of Camillia Sinensus, commonly known worldwide as either tea or chai. Our conversations will examine the multiple ways that tea is produced, distributed, consumed, represented and ritualized across Asia, from its ancient origins in the Himalayan hills of China and Assam to its global spread in the colonial era to its current status as both daily staple and healthy alternative.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

ON CAMPUS AND BEYOND

Early Asian alumni website to launch in October 2018

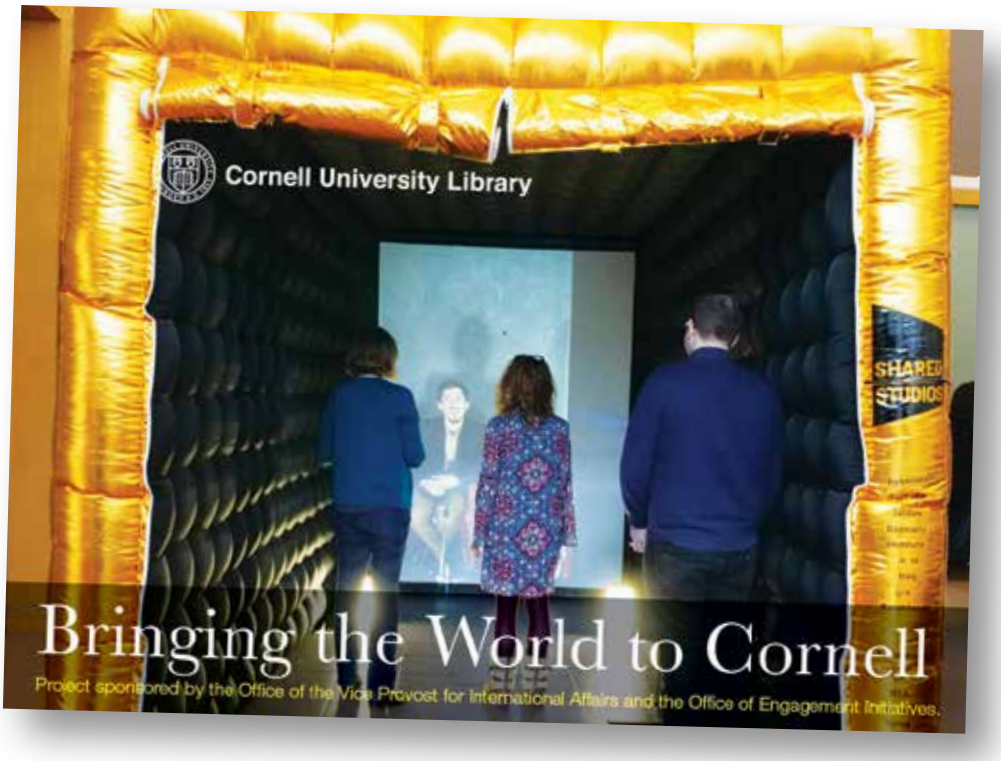
Cornell's early history has significant intersections with Asia, with students from all parts of Asia attending Cornell and Cornell graduates whose lives were spent living and working in Asia. The stories of these individuals form an important part of Cornell's international legacy. The Asian Alumni Project is a digital platform that spotlights these individuals and shares information about their time at Cornell. The website features an extensive, searchable database of all known early Asian Alumni, a timeline that tracks the numerous Cornell connections to Asia, and wonderful photographs of the fascinating individuals whose lives were shaped by Cornell and who helped make it the institution it is today.

Please visit: www.cornellasianalumni.com

Fall 2018 SEAP Gatty Lecture Series

FOR THE FULL LISTING of the Fall 2018 weekly Gatty lectures, visit: https://seap.einaudi.cornell.edu/.

8/30	**Arnika Furhmann** — Digital Futures? Thai Medialities, the Temporalities of Prohibition, and the Expansion of the Sphere of Political Expression
9/6	**Rebakah Minarchek** — Challenging the Map: Indigenous Resistance to Maps as an Object of Power
9/13	**Etin Anwar** — Epistemology of Islamic Feminism: Contexts and Contestation in Indonesia
9/20	**Yen Vu** — Prodigal Sons and Disparate Selves: Vietnamese Youth and Intellectuals in Colonial Transitions
9/27	**Daniel Kaufman** — Between Mainland and Island Southeast Asia: Evidence for a Mon-Khmer presence in Borneo
10/4	**Xiaoming Zhang** — China's 1979 War with Vietnam: Continuing Implications
10/11	**Nico Ravanilla** — Political Cycle in Public Works Procurement in the Philippines
10/18	**Faizah Zakaria** — The Toba Super Catastrophe as the History of a Future
10/25	**Arnout van der Meer** — Performing Colonialism: Hegemony, Representative Culture, and Resistance in Late Colonial Indonesia
11/1	**Erin Lin** — How War Changes Land: The Legacy of US Bombing on Cambodian Development
11/8	**Katie Rainwater** — Thailand's Rural Proletariat: Rethinking Power Relations Through Focus on the Farmed Shrimp Sector
11/15	**Mariam Lam** — Undercurrents: Southeast Asian Transnational and Diasporic Culture
11/29	**Alex-Thai D. Vo** — Revolution in the Village: Land Reform, Class Struggle and Transformation in North Vietnam, 1945-1960



THE PORTAL: global engagement without leaving campus

Collaborate and converse with people in Yangnon, Myanmar and in other parts of the world via the Portal, at Cornell from August to November 2018. When you enter the Portal, you come face-to-face with someone in a distant Portal and can converse live, full-body, and make eye contact, as if in the same room. Innovative A/V technology and life-sized screens enable meaningful face-to-face interactions with people from at least 20 sites around the world, including Afghanistan, Honduras, Germany, Iraq, India, Jordan, Mexico, Myanmar, Palestine, Rwanda, and in the US. Here are some ways you can make the most of the Portal:

- Develop class programming in advance, with the help of the Center for Teaching Innovation and Office of Engagement Initiatives.
- Reserve the Portal for projects or assignments relating to global or engaged learning, from language instruction to sustainability to criminal justice.
- Engage with portal users around specific themes during walk-in hours.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, visit: guides.library.cornell.edu/portal

Kahin Center Update

Rebakah Minarchek has graciously accepted the position of 2018–2019 Kahin Center building manager. Please direct questions and requests to her at **kahinbuildingmnger@einaudi.cornell.edu.**

Rebakah Daro Minarchek is pleased to join the Kahin Center staff again after a six-year break from the last time serving as building coordinator. She is a PhD student in the Department of Development Sociology completing her research on West Java, Indonesia. She also spent nearly three years living and conducting research in Thailand.

Ea Darith — Visiting Fellow at Cornell University (August 1 to December 24, 2018)

Deputy Director of the Angkor International Center for Research and Documentation, Head of Angkor Ceramics Unit, APSARA Authority, Kingdom of Cambodia

Dr. Ea Darith received his bachelor of arts degree from Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh in 1995, his master's degree from Kyoto University in 2000, and his doctoral degree from Osaka Ohtani University in Japan in 2010. Since 2000, he has been working at APSARA Authority, the organization charged with protecting Angkor Archaeological Park, and teaching the History of Khmer Ceramics at the Royal University of Fine Arts, Faculty of Archaeology. He also teaches History of Cambodia, Khmer Studies, and World Civilization at Pannasastra University of Cambodia in Siem Reap. In 2004, Darith received a scholarship from the Asian Cultural Council to study how to manage artifacts from excavation to storage at Arizona State University, Freer|Sackler Galleries (Smithsonian), and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. He has coordinated a spectrum of diverse projects between APSARA Authority and numerous international teams.

Darith's main research interests focus on Khmer stoneware ceramics during the Angkor period from the ninth to fifteenth centuries. He has excavated more than ten stoneware kilns as well as other monumental sites through the Angkor region and presented at international conferences. In 2015, he took over all management of ceramics excavated from the Angkor area as part of the new ceramics conservation, research, and documentation initiative of APSARA Authority. He was a Nalanda Sriwijaya Center Visiting Fellow in Singapore in 2014–2015 and has codirected previous joint research and field-school projects, where he has produced a seminal paper on the Torp Chey kilns and a book on Angkor Wat, and conducted seminars on current Cambodian archaeological research.

In 2016, Darith was invited by the Center for Khmer Studies at Wat Damnak to serve as a tour guide for students from Cornell University enrolled in a Winter Session course, Performing Angkor: Dance, Silk, and Stone, taught by history of art Professor Kaja McGowan. On a bus back from Kbal Spean, McGowan invited Darith to come to Cornell in Fall 2018 as a visiting fellow and to teach a collaborative seminar entitled Water: Art and Politics in South and Southeast Asia, which meets Wednesdays at 2:30–4:25 p.m. in the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art.

SEAP Graduate Student Committee Co-Chairs

The 2018–2019 co-chairs are Michael Kirkpatrick Miller and Astara Light. They will run the SEAP graduate conference in the spring, social events for the SEAP community, and the weekly Ronald and Janette Gatty Lecture Series, named in honor of SEAP alumni Ronald Gatty and Janette Gatty and their substantial contribution to SEAP programming, especially activities led by graduate students.

Michael Kirkpatrick Miller is a PhD student in the Department of History, studying modern Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Michael plans to research the history of gender and sexuality in the port cities of Makassar, Gorontalo, Manado, and Ambon during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of Dutch colonialism in the Indonesian Archipelago. He is very much looking forward to being a graduate co-chair for this academic year.

Astara Light is a PhD student in the History of Art and Visual Studies Department. Her research centers on modern and contemporary Balinese and Indonesian art forms, with a broader focus on artists who are exhibiting their work internationally and in Japan. She is interested in the representation of movement, performance, and dance in visual media and has been involved in curatorial projects. She is looking forward to planning SEAP events this year.

AWARDS

2017 Lauriston Sharp Prize

We are pleased to award the 2017 Lauriston Sharp Prize for outstanding achievement to Jack Meng-Tat Chia, who completed his PhD in history in 2017. Named in honor of the founder of the Southeast Asia Program, Lauriston Sharp (1907–93), the prize is awarded each year to a recent PhD who has contributed most outstandingly to both scholarship on Southeast Asia and to the community life of the Southeast Asia Program.

Chia's dissertation is a study of Buddhist modernism in maritime Southeast Asia, a topic that has received scant attention from scholars of the region or from scholars of religion and history, more broadly. Drawing on sources in Indonesian and various Chinese languages, and adopting a transnational history perspective that links developments in the region to those in mainland China and beyond, Chia shows how Chinese Buddhist monks play a crucial role in transmitting ideas of Buddhist modernism to the region—and also in *creating* new ideas of Buddhist modernism in the region. In doing so, he also broadens the category of Southeast Asian Buddhism to include South China Sea Buddhism, thereby complicating a common distinction drawn between Chinese/Mahayana and Southeast Asian/Theravada Buddhism. Chia's dissertation is a first-rate piece of scholarship, meticulously researched, carefully argued, and engagingly written. It will set a new agenda for modern Buddhist studies in maritime Southeast Asia, and marks the start of a promising career for a committed SEAP member.

Jack Meng-Tat Chia is a senior tutor in the Department of History at the National University of Singapore and currently a postdoctoral fellow at the Center for Buddhist Studies, University of California, Berkeley. His research focuses on Buddhism in maritime Southeast Asia, Chinese popular religion, overseas Chinese history, and Southeast Asia-China interactions. He is currently completing his first book manuscript titled "Monks in Motion: Buddhism and Modernity across the South China Sea," which explores the history of Buddhism in inter-Asian contexts and the intersections between national and Buddhist institutional projects in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Chia is co-editor of *Living with Myths in Singapore* (2017) and has published articles in journals such as *Archiv Orientální, Asian Ethnology, China Quarterly, History of Religions, Journal of Chinese Religions, Material Religion,* and *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia.* His next book project, "Beyond the Borobudur: Buddhism in Postcolonial Indonesia," focuses on the history and development of Buddhism in the world's largest Muslim country since 1945.

DEGREES CONFERRED

Cornell University Southeast Asia DOCTORAL Degrees

AUGUST 2017

Alice Beban
Development Sociology
Chair: Wendy Wolford
"Unwritten Rule(s): Uncertain Statemaking on Cambodia's Land Frontier"

Gregory Thaler
Government
Chair: Herring J. Ronald
"Forest Governance and Global Development: The Land Sparing Fallacy in Brazil and Indonesia"

Meng-Tat "Jack" Chia
History
Chair: Eric Tagliacozzo
"Diasporic Dharma: Buddhism and Modernity across the South China Sea"

MAY 2018

Natalia Angela Di Pietrantonio
History of Art, Archaeology, and Visual Studies
Chairs: Kaja McGowan and Iftikhar Dadi
"Erotic Visions: Poetry, Literature, and Book Arts from Avadh, 1754–1857"

Mattias Fibiger
History
Chairs: Fredrik Logevall and Eric Tagliacozzo
"The International and Transnational Construction of Authoritarian Rule in Island Southeast Asia, 1969-1977"

Santi Saypanya
Natural Resources
Chairs: Marianne Krasny and Richard Stedman
"Assessing a Social Marketing Campaign on Wildlife Conservation in Nam Et-Phou Louey National Protected Area, Lao People's Democratic Republic"

Timothy Gorman
Development Sociology
Chair: Wendy Wolford
"Making and Unmaking an Agricultural Miracle: Infrastructure, Accumulation, and Resistance in Vietnam's Mekong Delta"

Cornell University Southeast Asia MASTER'S Degrees

AUGUST 2017

Harry Suwanto
Asian Studies
Chair: Eric Tagliacozzo
"The Bald Eagle and the Garuda: A History of American Encounters with the East Indies in the 18th and 19th Centuries"

Mai Van Tran
Government
Chair: Thomas Pepinsky

Margaret Cora Jack
Information Science
Chair: Steven J. Jackson

Mary Moroney
Linguistics
Chair: John Whitman

DECEMBER 2017

Alexandra Dalferro
Anthropology
Chair: Marina Welker

Kevin Foley
Government
Chair: Andrew Mertha

Oradi Inkhong
Anthropology
Chair: Marina Welker

MAY 2018

Kritapas Sajjapala
Asian Studies
Chair: Keith Taylor
"Thailand-Vietnam Relations in the 1990s"

SEAP FACULTY 2018-2019

Shorna Allred, associate professor, natural resources

Warren B. Bailey, professor, finance, Johnson School of Management

Christine Balance, associate professor, Asian American studies, performing and media arts

Randolph Barker, professor emeritus, agricultural economics

Victoria Beard, associate professor, city and regional planning (on leave Fall 2018)

Anne Blackburn, professor, Asian studies

Thak Chaloemtiarana, professor, Asian literature, religion, and culture; and Asian studies

Abigail C. Cohn, professor, linguistics and director of the Southeast Asia Program

Magnus Fiskesjö, associate professor, anthropology (on leave Fall 2018)

Chiara Formichi, associate professor, Asian studies

Arnika Fuhrmann, assistant professor, Asian studies

Jenny Goldstein, assistant professor, development sociology

Greg Green, curator, Echols Collection on Southeast Asia

Martin F. Hatch, professor emeritus, music

Ngampit Jagacinski, senior lecturer, Thai, Asian studies

Yu Yu Khaing, lecturer, Burmese, Asian studies

Sarosh Kuruvilla, Andrew J. Nathanson Family professor, industrial and labor relations (on leave Fall 2018 and Spring 2019)

Tamara Lynn Loos, professor, history

Kaja M. McGowan, associate professor, art history, archaeology

Christopher J. Miller, senior lecturer, music

Stanley J. O'Connor, professor emeritus, art history

Jolanda Pandin, senior lecturer, Indonesian, Asian studies

Thomas Pepinsky, associate professor, government (on leave Fall 2018)

Hannah Phan, senior lecturer, Khmer, Asian studies

Maria Theresa Savella, senior lecturer, Tagalog, Asian studies

James T. Siegel, professor emeritus, anthropology

Eric Tagliacozzo, professor, history

Keith W. Taylor, professor, Asian studies (on leave Fall 2018)

Erik Thorbecke, H. E. Babcock professor emeritus, economics and food economics

Thúy Tranviet, senior lecturer, Vietnamese, Asian studies

Marina Welker, associate professor, anthropology

John Whitman, professor, linguistics (on leave Fall 2018)

Andrew Willford, professor, anthropology

Lindy Williams, professor, development sociology (on leave Fall 2018 and Spring 2019)

John U. Wolff, professor emeritus, linguistics and Asian studies

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NEW JOHNSON MUSEUM ACQUISITION

The small, square *tampan* cloth could be used and displayed in a variety of ways for ceremonies marking important life transitions: birth, circumcision, marriage, promotion in social rank, and death. The intricately woven design of this *tampan* consists of horizontal rows of pairs of small boats that confront each other, each containing a peacock and human figure. Additional human figures are shown between the boats.

In Tantric Buddhist practice, prevalent in southeastern Sumatra, the *Mahamayuri Vidyarajni* (Peacock Sutra) was a potent text in which the spiritual force embodied by the peacock eliminates all afflictions and dangers. To aid a vulnerable person in transition, the peacock would be a particularly efficacious symbol. Ships, commonly depicted on *tampan* cloths, reflect the importance of sea trade to the local economy and serve as conveyances for persons moving from one stage of life to another.

Indonesia, Sumatra, Lampung province

Tampan ceremonial cloth

Cotton, supplementary weft woven

26 3/8 × 25 1/4 inches (67 × 64.1 cm)

Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art

Gift of Dr. Joel Confino and Lisa Alter